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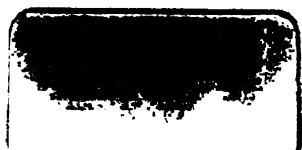
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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF SELECT FICTION

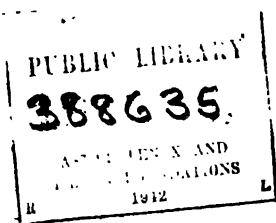
VOLUME XIII.

MAY-AUGUST, 1893

THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE
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ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PRO-
CURABLE IN ALL THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES

"Were I called upon to designate that class of composition which should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the short prose tale. The novel is objectionable from its length. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality."—EDGAR ALLAN POE.

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A Business Flirtation

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The Throne of England

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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

Vol. XIII. No. 1. *This magazine is planned to cover the story-telling field of the world. Its selections will be of the best procurable in all the languages.* MAY, 1893



NOT A SALON PICTURE*

BY PAULINE HOFFMAN.



THE conversation had turned upon pictures and galleries, and the Old Masters and the new French school, and even the English artists had been warmly attacked and defended. Nearly all the group had been abroad several times, and they spoke with familiarity of foreign places. "When I was last in Dresden," "You remember, of course, at the Louvre," "That was my first visit to Rome," and so on, as though the Atlantic were

*A touching incident of the American Revolution. Written for Short Stories. With illustrations by Wm. H. Lippincott.—Copyrighted.

a myth and those far lands of poets dreams and artists' longings at our very doors. One young man had not taken much part in the discussion, and now in a little pause a pretty woman with fair hair turned to him and said: "Why are you so silent? You have been abroad, of course; tell us, what is your favorite picture?"

"No, I have never been abroad," he answered, "but I have a favorite picture all the same; and I have been silent, because I have been listening to all your praises of the paintings you liked, for I wanted to know if any of you cared as much for your choice as I do for mine."



"Well! do we not?" she laughed; "I am sure I missed the train at Cologne from gazing at the portrait of Queen Louise."

"No," said the young man, "I believe I love mine the best; I think it means the most to me, and has given me most pleasure and good. It is dearer to me than yours are to you; more a part of me, more my own."

"What is it?" asked one of the party bluntly, while the others looked at the young man with smiling indulgence.

"It is hardly worth while," he answered carelessly; "you have never seen this picture, it is not in a gallery."

"So much the better," rejoined the pretty blonde, "it will be something new for us."

"But I warn you," he said laughing, "that my description will be a long one, in fact a kind of story, a bit of history."

They told him they were not afraid, and that time was as nothing, for their curiosity was piqued, and his diffidence and coyness in accepting the rôle of raconteur had convinced them that he was not a bore.

"If you wish it," he yielded at last, "it will give me great pleasure;" and then after a pause of a few moments he commenced:

"Last Summer when many of you were wandering up and down galleries and cathedrals in the Old World, I was spending a good part of my time in riding alone through some of the quiet shady lanes that intersect the country between Wilmington and Westchester. Delaware had its share of battles and skirmishes during the Revolutionary War, and this tract of land especially is rendered interesting by the Battle of the

Brandywine and the subsequent manœuvres of the British and American forces.

"I do not know that I have ever cared much for the history that is written in books, but the history that is handed down by tradition, that lives, not because of careful preservation, but because it is too vigorous to die, has to me a wonderful charm and interest. The muse gives her best not to the bookmakers and compilers but to the common people; it is from them that you hear some word repeated through generations, some human note that suddenly makes all you have read and studied alive and real.

The Battle of the Brandywine had never been anything to me but a name until I came into this neighborhood, and heard the ignorant and the credulous part of the population tell what their grandfathers



had told them and point to places where deeds of daring or of cruelty had been done. When the lumberless adventures, the escapes, the single-hand combats, the desperate rides and brave deaths of unknown men were related to me I began to realize how many men it takes to make a battle, how much human life and passion ebbs and flows with its reverses, and that it is not ivory men on a gay chess-board that the generals are moving.

"In my conversations with the blunt, homely, country folk, I heard several times of a deserted house remote from a high road, where a French officer was said to have stayed in hiding after the defeat, and where he had painted a picture. I resolved to see for myself the house, for the story of the unknown man interested me. It was that a young Frenchman, presumably one of the many officers with Lafayette, while reconnoitering on the day of the



battle to put an end to the uncertainty that reigned at headquarters, had found himself unexpectedly in the midst of the British forces. In endeavoring to get back he had received a slight flesh-wound, and after hard riding, had finally taken refuge

with some Quakers in a farmhouse. Here he stayed concealed in the garret for more than a week, until on hear-

ing that Washington had re-commenced operations and that General Wayne had advanced as far as Paoli, he resolved to attempt to join the army again. He started forth on the very night that General Wayne was surprised and attacked by the British, and the young officer had not gone far before he fell in with some of the enemy's troops and was wounded, this time mortally. Without his horse and almost unconscious he managed to drag himself back to the farmhouse. Though faint and exhausted he insisted with all his remaining breath and strength on being carried up to the garret, where he died, after a few hours passed by him, according to tradition, in one long, absorbing gaze at his picture.

"I collected a good many descriptions of the old farmhouse and directions to it, compared and revised them by my own knowledge of the country, and rode off one morning with a tolerably good idea of where I was going.

"It was a delightful cool June morning, royal weather, a sky without a cloud or even a remembrance of storm. A day when the world seemed new and young, not burdened with a past full of sad lives and deaths, hopeless endeavors and relinquished aim. A day when ancient tragedies, which have oppressed and frightened us with vague threats of recurrence, seem but faded nightmares. The present was the only reality, as, after travelling several miles on the highway, I rode slowly with the reins on my horse's neck up a narrow road now unused, grass-grown and washed by rains; and the songs of the birds in the cherry-trees which bordered the lane, and the cherries which I plucked and ate in passing, occupied my thoughts much more than did the fate of the young Frenchman who died so long ago.



"At last I came to the house. There was no mistaking it; it was exactly as had been described. Just a corner of it showed from the lane, and I rode in through a little break in the trees over a road almost hidden by weeds and grasses. The house is a small stone cottage, dilapidated, deserted, forlorn and falling to pieces, and yet not ugly nor unpicturesque. Its decay and distress are concealed partially by thickly-growing

vines which cover the white wooden porch now broken and insecure. Two rose bushes, planted on either side of the wretched tottering steps, were flowering with lavish prodigality of color and perfume, and a big cherry-tree in front seemed to feed hundreds of quarrelsome, garrulous robins. It was evident that no one had lived in the house for years; several of the windows were broken, a chimney was blown off. I kicked a step of the porch and the rotten plank gave way disclosing myriads of hurrying ants; but it had been a pretty homelike little cottage in its day, and no doubt appeared a beautiful, peaceful haven of refuge to the officer fleeing from the bullets of the English troopers.

"Ah! but how did it appear to him on the day when, wounded, he crept back to die? Did he hate it as his fate, his dark tower? Did he curse the land for which he had come unasked to fight and for which he had lost his life? I think not. There was something in that house which he loved, loved so strongly that he overcame the faintness of death to reach it; something in that garret room where he had lain hidden that was worth struggling and pleading for with his last breath.

"I stepped cautiously over the porch, pushed the front door ajar, and after a slight struggle with a rusty old latch, entered the hall. There was a room on each side of it, both empty, with the exception of a broken chair or two. After a glance at the big square kitchen, which had not quite so cold and forgotten an appearance as the other rooms, I mounted the rickety steps. Vacancy and dust reigned everywhere; the air within had no consciousness of the powerful, glorious June without, and I was rather disheartened by the time I came to the garret.

"The roof sloped a good deal, and only at one end of the room was it possible to stand upright. It was very dark, and I stumbled about opening shutters. After letting in a beautiful stream of air and sunshine, I turned and looked about me. There on the wall opposite to me was the loveliest face and figure I have ever seen, an unfinished portrait of a young girl painted on the plastered wall, faded and dimmed somewhat by time, it is true, but soft and visionary. It is life-size and full length, but only the upper part of the figure and the bodice are painted; the skirt has a few shadows thrown in, and the feet are only outlined. The face is very young, and its character spirituelle and idealistic; its shape is oval,

but the chin is too small and fine for perfect regularity, and there is a delicacy and tenderness about the contour of the cheek that is touching and pitiful, that calls for protection and gentleness. It is the face of one who should be guarded



and shielded by a strong arm. The large hazel eyes are liquid and soft, yet divine with enthusiasm; they are the eyes of a gentle, loving woman, and of an unyielding martyr. The mouth is a cupid's bow, childish and playful, with a sug-

gestion of dimples, and the nose is straight, aristocratic and proud, befitting the nobility of the brow. It is the portrait of a beautiful child, unformed and inexperienced, and in the smooth, cloudless features there is no past to read over a future. It is the hopes and fears, the promises and unconscious prophecies of the picture that give it such hold on the imagination. That mouth made for kisses, those passionate, pure eyes, those proudly arched brows, and those sensitive, delicate curves show a heart formed for great happiness or great sorrow. The slender white throat and the graceful shoulders are painted with a caressing touch. The artist loved those curves, and trembled when he recalled and tried to copy them. The gown is pink, the waist pointed and tightly laced, and the short sleeves slashed and puffed with some thin, white stuff. One hand is raised, and waving a handkerchief, the other holds back some stray golden locks blown about by breezes. 'Adieu? Adieu?' she seems to say, not knowing, poor, trusting, true, little maiden, on how long a journey her lover was going.

"Yes, her lover he must have been. None other could have painted the soul in those eyes or have showed the latent pathos and passion in the childish face. Many an hour he had stood where I was standing and gazed upon his pictured sweetheart; murmured words of love, no doubt, prayers, vows, entreaties, to her semblance while his heart longed for her very self; and there, with his eyes fastened upon that vision, becoming ever fainter and more distant to him, the spirit of the young Frenchman had fled. 'Adieu!' she waved her dying lover as once she had to him departing, and still she gazes after him although it is long since he has gone.

"A dainty French demoiselle she looks in her quaint, modish pink gown, the life and gayety, perhaps, of some grim old château in sunny France until the long heartsick years of loneliness. He died unknown and among strangers, and she waited on in vague expectancy; starting at every horse's hoof that approached her home and growing pale and trembling at each dreary intelligence from across the seas. The tears those hazel eyes have shed! Poor little maiden, the memory of your dead lover made you brave in the terrible Reign of Terror, for you never doubted or forgot him! You were too noble for that!

"I am glad he got back to that room to die; I am thankful

his last look rested on that picture. In its presence he did not feel that he was dying alone and in a strange land. She was with him. He felt that she knew, and that it was all right. I can see him now stretched out on the floor in front of his painting, wounded and bleeding, his head on his cloak folded beneath it, his eyes gazing steadily in one direction, death made beautiful as life had been by love ——"



There was a pause, the young man was looking straight ahead of him as though he saw in the air the picture he had been describing.

"Is that all?" asked the pretty blonde in a

hushed voice that told of tears.

"Oh!" he said, "no; but there is not much more. In searching through the dust and trash in the garret I came across this and this," and he drew out his pocket-book, and opening it, showed a knot of faded pink ribbon and a torn, yellowed scrap of paper with some French words faintly legible upon it, and opposite to each the equivalents in English written several times as though for practice. "I looked up a descendant of the Quaker couple who had lived in the house at the time of the Battle of the Brandywine," he went on, handing his time-worn treasures to his listeners, "an old woman, whom I questioned closely. She could not tell me much, however, that I had not heard before, except that her grandfather had never been able to discover the Frenchman's name, that he was very young, hardly more than a boy, slight, with dark eyes and gentle voice. She did not know where he was buried."

The young man silently reached out his hand to his fair friend for his precious trifles.

She was pressing the faded ribbon to her lips.



ETCHING : OUTCASTS*

BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

A black sky and a biting wind. Two ragged gamins upon a crowded city thoroughfare. The day leaned toward early



evening. Hungry and worse than homeless, these boys, spawn of the tenement district, plied the trade of street beggars. So far the day had been well nigh profitless. Pretty young girls and stylish dames returning from shopping expeditions or calls, hurried on their way, unmindful of the empty outstretched palms. Some were too encumbered with parcels, others too closely wrapped in furs, others too anxious over waiting

duties, to pause upon the cold street corner and hunt for change to bestow upon professional beggars. Even the actresses, so frequently liberal givers, passed by to-day with unseeing eyes. Night's threatening face peered near, and the homeless, unfed boys looked in each other's eyes and shivered.

Down the street swept one who was neither pretty girl, stylish dame nor gay actress, though jewels gleamed above her boa of plumes, and her silken garments swished about her little feet as she walked. It was her passion for jewels, plumes and silken robes that made her what she was; for she had been born in the reeking tenement districts, and recalled a childhood as wretched as that of these poor boys who watched her approach with eager, hopeful eyes.



* An etching of the streets. Written and illustrated for Short Stories. Copyrighted.

"Here's one as'll give us suthin'" whispered Billy to Tom. Though scarcely nine years old, he knew vice in all its forms, and in the glassy eyes and fitful smile of the woman who drew near he easily read her story.



Her glance fell upon the thinly-clad urchins. She paused, opened a purse with silver clasps, and dropped a shining dollar in each grimy palm. As she passed down the street the beggars looked in each other's faces with radiant eyes.

"It's the bad uns as is good, ain't it Billy?" quoth Tom paradoxically, and Tom responded with gusto, "You bet!"



ETCHING : HADASSKA'S WEDDING*

BY SACHER-MASOCH

In the house of Gerson Chefez, all the windows were illuminated. Music, laughter and the sound of many voices overflowed into the dark snow-covered street.



The bridegroom had thrown the gold-broidered white veil over Hadasska's mournful countenance;—the bleating fool had chanted his merriest verses;—the bride had been led into the Synagogue, to Lebele Hirsch, under the wedding canopy;—her glorious hair had been shorn and they had decked the lovely victim with ribands and jewels—the Rabbi had consecrated the marriage;—the goblet, out of which the newly wedded pair had drunk, was shattered.

To the sound of flutes and viols, the wedding procession returned from the temple to the house of Gerson Chefez, and after a royal feast the dancing began—men dancing with men, the women with women.

Hadasska sat upon an elevated seat, as on a throne, clad from head to foot in white satin, trimmed with the luxurious fur of the silver fox, as though she were wrapped in the silvery sheen of the moonlight. On her pure forehead sparkled diamonds, pearls, emeralds and rubies of fabulous worth.

Suddenly there was a noise without. Hadasska started and pressed both hands to her heart. She knew Plutin would come, and in truth, he had just arrived with his friends.



*Translated from the Hungarian by C. E. Steinmetz, and illustrated for Short Stories. Copyrighted.

They tried to hinder his entrance but, pistol in hand, he forced his way, and pale as death, but with flaming eyes, he pressed into the room.

"Help! Help!" cried Gerson Chefez, "what means the ill-fated wretch! Does he want to murder us all?"

The dance ceased, the music was silenced. The guests began to shriek in fear. Some attempted to snatch the pistol from Plutin but recoiled from its threatening muzzle;—some took to flight;—some opened the windows and shouted for help.

"Only tell me," began Gerson Chefez, "Only tell me, Plutin, what you wish and put up your weapon."

"I have come to dance with the bride," replied Plutin, putting the pistol into his pocket and advancing toward Hadasska.

With a mournful smile she arose and descended the steps of her wedding throne.

As he embraced her she whispered, "It is good that you came. . . . I feel I shall die. . . . at least I shall die in your arms."

"Help!" shouted Lebele Hirsch, "We Jews do not allow a man to dance with a woman,

and I'll not let my wife hop about with a dog of a Gentile."

He tried to take Hadasska away, but Plutin seized him by the beard and dashed him to the floor.

The tumult began afresh, but loud above the din rang the clear voice of Plutin.

"Music! Music!" he cried, stamping impatiently. Abraham Tobah was the first to seize his violin and, after Tschitscherin and Nabufroffko had pushed back the throng, the other musicians joined in.

Hadasska flew with Plutin through the room.

"Ah! how I love you!" she murmured with a blissful smile.

The next instant she uttered a piercing shriek that was drowned by the music and din of angry voices.

Her lovely head sank on Plutin's breast, her arm fell from his shoulder among the glimmering folds of her bridal robes, she lay heavily in his arms, and the hand he clasped in his grew cold as lifeless marble.



It was the hand of a corpse.

He noticed it not but danced on to the sound of flutes and viols.

The mother shrieked, "My child! my child! she is dying!"

The music ceased. All rushed toward Plutin who, terror-stricken, gazed on Hadasska lying cold and motionless in his arms.

They tore her from him—they tried to rouse her—physicians came—Gerson Chenez tore his hair and beard—all in vain. Hadasska was dead.

And Plutin was borne away by his friends, dazed, not knowing what was happening to him.



A BUSINESS FLIRTATION*

BY WILL CARLETON.

One of the hottest days that New Jersey had known that summer, closed at last with the celebration of a singularly gorgeous sunset. A soothing coolness from the neighboring hills was brought by a cosy, whispering little breeze, that seemed to encourage all nature in drawing a long breath. The tired little country-world in which Badger McPherson was a pilgrim and a stranger became more lively and aggressive; sounds of mirth and jollity came to him from green farms along the broad white ribbon of a wagon-road, on which, afoot and alone, he was journeying. Once in a while strains of vocal music, their roughness softened by distance, came from some one of the little valleys or hill-tops, and made him homesick.

The young man had a long, narrow cylinder under his arm, about the length of a Winchester rifle. But it was not a gun, for it had no lock, stock, or barrel. Neither was it a telescope, although the young man had a scholarly look. It was not a roll of manuscript, with gigantic pages. It was a parcel of maps.

Badger McPherson was a fine-looking, well-limbed young theologian from Minceton. He was still a Junior, but had studied enough to compel him to brace up his health with a great deal of athletics and resolution. He was ambitious, and felt that he had undeveloped talents, if not genius, that would burst forth into an arc of oratorical electric lights immediately after his ordination. His primary idea was, of course, to succeed in winning souls from the wrath to come; but he had no objection to the possession of more or less earthly affection. In fact, in the pictures that he painted of his future ministrations, there were a good many worldly successes interspersed. He had decided not to be an ascetic in any form, and had quite a long list of earthly pleasures on the programme-tablets of his mind—not incompatible, he thought, with his divine mission.

*The Story of a Canvasser. Written for Short Stories. Copyrighted.

One of these pleasures was that of flirting; innocent social amenities he called it. He had a best girl down in Wilmington, Delaware, and loved her very dearly; but they could not be together all the while; he did not know exactly when they would be able to marry; and, being more than usually attractive, why should he not make himself agreeable to the other sex? he thought.

Badger McPherson was, greatly to his constant chagrin, poor; he had nothing but his life, and even that was mortgaged. He was making his way through college with borrowed money, secured from a half-philanthropic money-lender, with an insurance policy on himself.

There were several other students in the college besides Badger McPherson who had none too much spending money; and some, not so needy, who wished a summer "business lark," and a slight addition of money to their purses; and so had been organized, at the beginning of that summer, "The Scholastic Canvassing Club."

This was a small devastating army of students, who went through the country armed with maps of the United States, made according to the publisher and the general agent, with a minuteness and completeness that topographical science had never dreamed of before. These commercial troops marched in parallel lines, through several counties of the State, captured what unsuspecting farmers they could, and organized their prisoners of the subscription list into "clubs," each student receiving a commission for every victim he made.

The young gentleman walking down this particular road had not to-day done a good ten hours' work, although expending so much eloquence and erudition that he felt on the verge of mental bankruptcy. People did not want maps just then; the resident population seemed quite content to stay mentally as well as physically within their present environment, without any reference to other states and territories. He had been asked, two or three times, why he didn't work for a living; a benevolent looking old lady had offered him his dinner, if he would saw a cord of wood; once he had been taken for a tramp, and ordered to "move on there, now!" when he tried to enter the gateway to a rural nabob's mansion. He began to have some more little babyish thrills of homesickness, alternated with defiant flashes of feeling, in

regard to how these people would stand it when they should hear of him as the most popular pulpit orator of the land. He had procured their addresses, one from another, as he went along, and vowed to some time send them all tracts and sermons (of his own composition of course), until they trembled for an undesirable eternal future—produced partly by indifference to unknown theological students, and partly by ignorance of the map of the United States.

As the sun went inexorably out of view, he began to wonder in what house he should stay all night; or if he should have to sleep in some uninteresting barn, with the permission of the horses, mice and insects within it, or in one of the rough, improvised bed-chambers of a straw stack. He had been told by several well-to-do members of the Farmers' Alliance that they were not in the lodging-house business that year; that they didn't find keeping boarders profitable; that there was a neat little tavern a few miles further on, etc., etc. But his purse was light, and his heels growing heavier and heavier, and he determined at last to make a most desperate effort to assist in getting back some of the money laid out on a house-roof.

He finally saw a handsome old farmhouse on a grove-sheltered hill, just ahead of him, and determined to sleep in that abode, if human ingenuity would obtain the desired permission. He hid his sample case of maps in a very obscure recess of a covered bridge, and went, with a refined boldness, up to the hospitable-looking door of his chosen shelter for the night.

"I was taking a pedestrian tour, have been belated, and stopped here to see if you could put me up for the night." This little historical romance Badger recited to the courtly old gentleman who came to the door, and in a manner that Lord Chesterfield would, under the circumstances, have found no particular fault with. It surprised Badger to see how fluent and magnetic he really was, with no maps to encumber him.

"Certainly, you can stay, sir," replied the old gentleman, with a glance at the good-looking young man, and a confiding air that cost the young man some feelings of mild remorse, when he thought of the different reception he might meet if the covered bridge could run in and say a word or two.

"Certainly, sir. Your name, please?"

The gay student presented one of his cards which he fortunately had with him, labeled "Mr. Badger McPherson, Class —, Minceton University"; and from that time was an honored guest in a very fetching domestic circle.

The courtly old gentleman who had met him at the door had a harmonious, ladylike wife, and two sons and three daughters, evidently acquired somewhat late in his prime; and with a rather bold flight of the imagination for a young theologian, Badger had the glimpse of a feeling that he would like to possess just such a family (with a city twist on it), when he had captured the world by his pulpit eloquence, and was pausing a little to take spiritual and physical breath.

The supper being over, there was a miniature informal party in the cozy but spacious sitting room, in which the young theologian shone brilliantly, and became a doubly welcome guest. He told several exhilarating college stories of which he was himself the half-admitted hero; joined all the songs, with a very passable and adjustable voice, which could be utilized as a tenor, alto, soprano or bass; suggested that one of the boys should try a course in his college; drew wildly exciting pictures of tennis, foot ball and rowing tournaments; recounted all the first principles of college athletics; and really lighted up the old farmhouse as it had not been for some time before.

The pet serpent of flirtation, however, soon managed to creep into this happy little domestic garden. The eldest daughter was about eighteen, a charmingly half-incomprehensible kind of young lady, and one that constantly put poor Badger on his mettle. She fascinated him in a way that caused him to almost pity his "best girl" down at Wilmington, although at heart he was faithful enough. Her eyes contained an expression of combined recklessness and pathos that he did not remember having found before. Her laugh was musical, but possessed the least tinge of bitterness—that touch or shade which makes some girls' merriment so queerly charming. He found himself in a mild sort of flirtation—a fit of false falling-in-love—a superficial frenzy, that was delightful while it was tantalizing. It was his imagination that was at work (or play) rather than his heart; but in an intense manner such as he had never used before in a flirtation, although something of an artist in these affairs of the outer approaches to the heart. It seemed perfectly natural to find himself

at last standing on the veranda alone with her, communicating the names of the different stars in sight, fancying he saw them all reflected in her eyes, and mentioning that fact, with a slight confirmatory pressure of her hand, which he had managed somehow to borrow for a few moments.

"Oh, you are probably like all the rest of your terrible sex," she purred, softly, with that bitter-sweet laugh, which puzzled while it thrilled him. "You flatter us poor girls, and get us to liking you, and then forget everything you have said, and us, too, as soon as we are out of sight."

What could poor Badger do, he thought, but give her hand an affirmative little pressure, and state his firm intention never, never to forget her, in tones whose soft touch upon the ear was at least first-cousin to tenderness.

"Still it is easy enough to say you will never forget any one, you know," insisted the young maiden, changing the stars reflected in her eyes, to falling ones. "But when it comes to really *doing* anything for her—sacrificing, you know—why, then, your whole race is faithlessness itself."

This innocent little verbal trap caught poor Badger completely. He asserted that she was cruelly mistaken in *him*, that he would be willing to do anything he could for her in the world, even at the risk of his life; and she must surely let him know, whenever he might be of any service whatever.

"Which I certainly will," she replied, in a strangely sweet tone, and a very slight pressure of the hand—so delicate that he was almost in doubt whether it were real or imaginary. And soon afterward they parted, with a very congenial and rather lingering good-night.

It was about half-past eleven, and Badger was in the neat room where he had been billeted, writing—not to his best girl in Wilmington, Delaware, as he had intended, but to one of his more confidential college chums. "I'm staying in a daisy place to-night," he had just said; "fine old farm house—people cordial and well bred—and have met here one of the divinest rural maidens you ever saw, Tom. I have never before found such a singular combine of keenness, simplicity and loveliness. She is deep; but the depths are as clear as the unsullied latent waves of a placid sylvan lake." (He had borrowed from himself a figure that was in one of

his note-books, entitled "Ornaments for future sermons when in a hurry.") "If you could only see her, Tom——"

There was a dainty little tap at the door. The young man hurriedly donned a coat, which he had thrown off for ease, and, to his great surprise, admitted the young lady he had been writing about only a few instants before.

"You are very much surprised," said this girl, in a low, mystery-voice, making a very pretty picture of herself as she stood gracefully outlined against the dark wall, with the lamp-light shining full upon her. And, indeed, Badger, who fancied he had upon his person a rule never to be taken off guard at anything, was somewhat startled, and blushed, in spite of several consecutive efforts to the contrary.

"All the people are in their 'little beds' but us, she continued, with an expansion of simplicity that gave the good young man an almost fatherly feeling toward her. "Nobody can know that I am here, unless—unless—(with a very slight instalment of the bitter-sweet laugh) you choose to tell them. I knew you would be up, for students are always decreasing the oil products of the country, while other people dream. You said a little while since that I was to let you know when you could serve me. I told you I would. Well, I have come to let you know."

Badger had recovered his rule never-to-be-surprised, from the pit into which it had temporarily fallen, and waited calmly for further information, though with a considerably accelerated movement of the heart.

"I thought you didn't mean it, you know," continued the young lady, looking at him gravely and steadfastly. "But I got to thinking afterwards, and decided that you did. I will tell you what I want, in a very few words, and you can do it for me easily—I want you to elope with me."

"Goodness! mercy! What does the girl mean?" mused poor Badger. He lost his rule never-to-be-surprised this time, completely and unreservedly, and admitted it, even to himself.

"You surprise me very, very, very much!" he said, in a hoarse whisper. "What in the world *can* you mean? Why, here you have known me only four or five hours, and now want to elope with me. What *can* you be thinking about?"

"You heard every word I said," insisted the young lady, with a lovely dignity that precluded any idea of "softness"

or intending forwardness. "I believe you can be trusted. And I want you to elope with me—to-night."

Mr. McPherson felt flattered—why should he not—even in the midst of the horror aroused by the proposed enterprise. To be sure, he knew that he was attractive enough, you know, and had some ways of his own, of course; and he believed—that is, he couldn't help believing, he was somewhat magnetic, you see, and girls *would* fall in love with him once in a while, of course—so he must do the father, brother and spiritual-adviser act, all in one, in this case. It would make a very pretty and creditable story to tell Tom, and one or two others—though the Best Girl at Wilmington must of course never hear anything about it; and—it would be *right*. He nerved and composed himself for the contest with this dainty little morsel of misdirected sentiment.

"My dear girl," he murmured, quietly and friendly, taking one of her hands in his, with a somewhat awkward paternal air, "You must pardon me for solemnly warning you against this infatuation."

"But what use is it to warn me?" asked the girl, looking at him straight in the eyes with an air of graceful honesty that he could not but respect, while he admired. "There is no escaping the infatuation; I do not think Heaven meant me to escape it."

"Oh, yes, it did," insisted Badger, quite positively. "Heaven always intended so lovely a girl should escape everything wrong. And besides, it would be impossible for me ever to join my fate with yours in the bonds of holy matrimony. I—am—am—am—engaged." The Best Girl at Wilmington, Delaware, shed her benign influence upon Badger's sense of memory, and gave him a glow of pride, that he was able to be thus faithful in the midst of dire temptation.

"Oh, how stupid I am!" she exclaimed, "I didn't tell you all. It is not *you* I am infatuated with. I don't want *you* to join your fate with mine in holy matrimony. I want you to take me to another young man."

The opportunity for doing this dear child good still remained; but it must be said, that Badger's interest in the matter suddenly sustained a decline, in spite of himself, and the whole affair became tedious and almost disgusting. He tried hard not to make an exhibit of this fact; but the quick intuition of the girl understood, and half pitied him for it.

He tried to smile, but his smile was all made-land, and existed entirely in the lower regions of his countenance; the eyes, which everybody finds at times hard to control, did not join in the facial festivity, but had a feeling-disappointed-in-spite-of-yourself look.

"You see, I couldn't help it," she murmured, looking at McPherson pettingly, and half pityingly. "I met him years ago, and—loved him at first—and—love him more and more the longer I know him—just as any one would you—I am sure—just as your sweetheart does, you know, probably. Don't you see?"

Badger replied that he saw, and tried hard to view the whole matter in a way not uncomplimentary to himself, still with a feeling that his vanity had received a curiously hard blow.

"But in that case, what do you want to elope with *me* for?" he inquired with the slightest twist of asperity to his tone. "What do you want to elope for anyhow?"

"That is the curious part of it," mused the girl, "and the most difficult. You see," with a deep, brooding look in her glorious eyes, which the best girl in Wilmington, Delaware, could not approach, "I love him—I love him so—"

"Yes, you love him," interrupted Badger, with increasing curtness, while he toiled hard to keep courteous. He began already to feel nearly exhausted with this fellow whom she "loved, loved so." "You told me that. But what do you want of me?"

"Oh," persisted the eccentric beauty, "I *ought* to love him awfully well, for I'm the only one of the family that does. They all hate him but me—poor, dear, unappreciated Hughie!"

So "Hugh" was the name of this fellow, who was, no doubt, a rascal. Badger had never liked the name Hugh, anyway; and its pet-elongation into "Hughie" struck him as peculiarly unpleasant. His own best girl had sometimes called him "Badgie," but even that seemed "stale, flat and unprofitable" just now.

"Father, mother, brothers, sisters, all hate him," continued the maiden reflectively. "Everybody is down on poor Hughie, except me, and I never, never will desert him! He is unfortunate, and most people hate misfortune, even in anybody else. He has explained all his troubles to me, and I am the

only one that understands him. All the rest of the world is against him."

A large symmetrical tear, that had been listening to the conversation from behind the corner of one of her eyes, now discovered itself, came boldly out, and, in a manner, tried to join the company. But it was promptly rebuked and sent away. This girl was no maiden-Niobe, no matter what else she might be.

"Well," replied Badger, getting his second wind, "the elopement is generally understood to be a wicked, dangerous, everlasting, regrettable kind of business; but, for the sake of the argument (laying your own sake aside for a moment), if you two want to elope, why in the world don't you do it? Why doesn't he come here and run off with you like a man? Why do you go telling other folks about it and try to get them to go along with you? Why doesn't he——"

"He is not able," murmured the young lady. "He cannot go anywhere, just at present. I can elope, but he can't for an hour or two yet, at least. He—he—isn't very well. Poor, dear Hughie!"

"Where is he," asked Badger, in rather an authoritative tone, feeling that there must be something very queer, if not crooked, in the young man in question.

"Hughie is in—in—in—jail," replied the maiden, with a quaver in her sweet voice. "But he has explained it all to me; how he happened to be found with the horse, the silks, and the jewelry, and the marked bills, and the counterfeit money, and all the things that they have been accusing him of. Oh, it is too bad! If they knew Hughie as well as I do, they would understand that he would never demean himself so as to steal horses, dry goods and things!"

"It is indeed unfortunate that the authorities hold the opinions you mention," replied Badger, dryly. He was fast dropping into sarcasm. "But admitting, for the sake of argument (and laying your own sake aside once more), that he is innocent, I should not think he would be in a very good condition to receive visitors in the dead of night, until after he has been tried and acquitted."

"No," replied the young lady pensively, but with growing cheerfulness, "he is not in a very good condition to receive visitors, but, for my sake, he will brace up to it. He has been tried and convicted, and will be sentenced and taken to

state's prison to-morrow, unless we go and help him out to-night. I have gathered enough getting-out tools to let him through to me in ten minutes. The jail is old, rotten and crazy. He can get everything through the grates by a string. He can cut a whole window out in a few minutes, he says, if he only has the tools. Poor Hughie is a natural mechanic. Then, you see, away we go, Hughie and I, to some place where true worth is appreciated, and innocent young men are not accused of burglary and other absurd crimes. I have gathered up enough money to keep us till Poor Hughie is proven innocent. We will commence life over again, my true love and I!"

"Well, in the name of all that's diabolical, go on and do it, then," blurted out the student, now thoroughly off his temper. "If you're bound to wed yourself to vice and crime for the remainder of life, forge ahead. But why should you try to mix *me* up in it? I've enough delinquencies of my own without going into partnership with 'Hughie.'"

"Oh, have *you* delinquencies?" inquired the girl, with so demure and well-balanced a manner that Badger has never been able to decide whether she was sarcastic or in earnest. "I thought *you* were about perfect. But, I tell you, Hughie is innocent!" with a slight flash in her steady, but constantly changing eyes. "It will be proved so, some day, he says, and Hughie wouldn't tell me a lie, oh, no! he would die sooner! He said so." (Badger reflected solemnly and savagely on the depths to which woman's infatuation could descend.) "It was all a mistake—a whole lot of mistakes. If he can only get out now, before he has incurred the disgrace of going to state's prison, and live under another name, somewhere where he can be appreciated—it will be all right; and that's what I want you to help me to help him to do!"

"Well?" punctuated Badger, with sullen curiosity.

"You see," continued the enterprising young lady, "I will tell you just how we can make it all come out, including Hughie. The jail is only four miles from this house. We will steal from here quietly, and in a half hour we can be there. Hughie will be expecting me; he always is, and especially to-night. He whispers through the grating, and says: 'Is that you, Co?' (Co is my short name for 'Columbia.') 'Yes, Hughie, and be awful quick,' I will say. 'Throw

out the dangler.' (That's what poor Hughie calls a string in that connection.) I'm afraid he has learned some slang in that terrible jail. He throws out the 'dangler,' and pulls up the 'priers,' as he calls them; opens the crazy old window of grates, or whatever it is; draws up a rope ladder, and is soon on the ground beside me."

"In such a case, two would be a tête-à-tête, and three a convention," replied Badger. "So you've no use for me, and I certainly have none for the proposed excursion of innocents. So good night and a pleasant journey."

"Oh, but you can be of more use than you thiuk," insisted the girl. "Let me go on. Poor Hughie gets to the ground and sees you. He says, 'Who's this bloke you've got with you?' (Hughie was always a little jealous of me). And then I say: 'It's not a bloke, Hughie, but a dear, good, sweet theological student from Minceton, who says he will do anything in the world he can for me, and now he's proving it.' And then, you see, dear Mr. McPherson, *you* climb up the rope ladder, and get into the cell, in Hughie's place—"

"The—that is, the dickens, I do!" growled Badger, under his breath.

"You understand," continued this singularly well-informed young lady, "the jailor has an inopportune way of owling through his old dungeon once an hour, just nowadays, and peeping into all the cells, on account of some restless and desperate counterfeiterers that need watching. If he should see that Hughie was gone, when he came around next time, he would shoot, and ring bells, and call out the militia or something, and we should be caught. It will take us till broad daylight to get to the cave in the woods, which we will make our first hiding place, and we need all the time. Now you climb up the ladder; get into the cell; replace the windows and things; put on poor, dear Hughie's coat, having exchanged with him before you climbed up; lie with your face to the wall; and when the jailor peeps in, he thinks Hughie is there, and goes along about his business. You lie quiet that way till he does that three or four times, and Hughie and I are well on our road. Then you—you—skin down the ladder, as poor Hughie calls it, mount old Plunger, an extra horse that we will take along for that purpose, and before our family are up, you can be snug in bed here. You will have to be a little cross with Plunger, or he may throw

you over his head; but I know you can manage him, being an athlete. How fortunate that all students are athletes in these days! And now," she continued, in a hurried manner, as if Badger had already eagerly fallen into her plans, "we must be off immediately. The horses are harnessed, saddled and waiting—although, poor, dear pets! they don't know what it's for." And her eyes moistened a little for these honest, unconscious steeds of the farm, for whom she evidently cherished a genuine love.

"Who the—that is, who the dickens harnessed and saddled them?" said Badger.

"I did," replied the young lady, "just before I came in here. I must now go to my room, and write a farewell note to my parents, and brothers and sisters." She burst into tears for the first time, but recovered herself immediately. "Steal softly through the door, and meet me twenty rods down the road, to the west of here. Don't make any racket; there is no need of it. The doors are all unlocked, the hinges oiled. Now be sure!" And this singularly determined and high-spirited girl fought back her tears, gave Badger's hand a hearty comrade-like pressure, and was going.

"And you think I will join in such an insane, such a thoroughly wicked, expedition?" groaned the student.

"What, are you backing out?" exclaimed the girl, turning round with a withering glance. "Afraid to do a little thing like that to save my life from being wrecked, when only a few hours ago you were ready to die for me! You don't dare do it! Oh, you don't *look* so very much like a coward!"

"I'm not a physical coward, I think," replied McPherson, "but I am afraid to help you in a course that will not only wreck your life, but your soul!"

"I tell you you don't know Hughie," shouted the thoroughly infatuated girl in a half whisper. "He doesn't go around wrecking souls, or hearts either. He is as good, as true, as honest as you are! Oh, you don't know him—you don't know him—you don't care or dare to help him, or me! Then I haven't one friend, till I get to him, and I will go alone! Good bye!" She started to leave the room.

Badger was thinking very fast. He thought he saw the right way out of the difficulty. It would certainly be no sin to deceive this wayward, headstrong girl, in order to keep

her from ruin. He let himself down gingerly into a bit of pious strategy.

"Well, if you put it that way," he said, "I can't resist you. I don't know as a little lark like that would hurt me, after all. You are sure I can get back in time?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly!" exclaimed the delighted girl. "You are so good—so kind—so brotherly—"

"Hardly brotherly," replied the dissembling youth. "A brother wouldn't do this sort of thing for you. He'd lock you up first."

"More than a brother you are!" exclaimed the girl. "A brother that understands me; a brother that helps one the way she wants to be helped. Oh, it was *lovely*—lucky that you happened to come here! You are *so* good."

She threw her arms around the young man's neck and gave him a thrilling, never-to-be-forgotten kiss. It was an innocent though intense caress of gratitude, but a bewildering one. Poor Badger forgot the Delaware young lady entirely for a moment. But with the reaction came more than ever a feeling that he must save this glorious creature; must keep her from the criminal who had somehow entrapped her in the meshes of his fascinations, and was trying to drag her down to himself.

"I must hurry," she exclaimed. "It is almost time we started. Oh, I shall soon be in dear Hughie's arms again!" And she, who had just had poor Badger for one stunning moment in her own, had flown softly to her room.

That last sentence did not decide the young man, but hastened him. He happened to know where her father's bedroom was, for the courtly old gentleman in last evening's conversation, he remembered (although it seemed now about a century ago), had been explaining the peculiar and advantageous construction of his little rural mansion.

He felt as he stood there, after knocking, like Iago rousing Brabantio to inform him of Desdemona's famous elopement with the brawny Othello. Fortunately, the old gentleman was a light sleeper, and his wife a heavy one. He hastily threw on his garments and came to the door. He saw in a moment who it was, by the lamp that Badger had brought with him.

"What is it, sir?" he said, courteously; "are you ill?"

"No, sir," was the reply, "but I feel it my duty to inform

you that your eldest daughter is in her room preparing to elope with a Mr. Hugh Somebody, after helping him out of jail. She——"

"Come with me, sir, if you please," interrupted the old man, who, evidently from former information, comprehended matters immediately; "I would like to have you with me." And they proceeded to the young lady's room, Badger very reluctantly, but not knowing exactly how to avoid it. She was in the midst of her note of farewell when so invaded; she had locked her door, as she supposed, but the bolt had slipped outside the slot, as bolts sometimes will do when shot in a hurry. The old gentleman now locked it, with very noticeable precision.

"I am very sorry, my dear daughter," he said kindly, "that you yet hold your extraordinary infatuation for that young man, and are willing to carry it to such lengths. Have you not read in the Good Book not to follow the steps of him that goeth astray?"

She said not a word, but retreated to a corner, where she stood like a half-penned tigress, about to spring. Badger, somehow or other, found himself standing in an opposite corner, just as far from her as he could get. The old gentleman proceeded:

"My dear, you have never become sufficiently acquainted with this Holy Book, although possessing such a beautiful edition of it." He picked up an elegant Westminster copy, and seated himself at the table on which she had just been writing her letter of farewell, at which he glanced, saying, in a kind but judicial way: "Very well composed, my dear. You are improving in English composition. Only the material, the subject matter, is at fault."

The good but shrewd old gentleman turned to the proverbs of Solomon, and read aloud everything he could find that bore upon the case. The girl half threw, half crouched herself gracefully on a small sofa near the corner, and said never a word.

The young student would have gone to his own room, but the door was locked, and the key in the other man's pocket. So he stood and listened (getting mighty tired, too,) for a long time, before the courtly old gentleman remembered to offer him a chair. For a long time the reading went on, varied by correlative passages in other parts of the Sacred

Writ, which this erudite parent found by means of a concordance. Badger loved the Scriptures, but he felt that this was rather more than he needed at one instalment. He did not like to ask for egress from the room, and, indeed, somehow, had a faint suspicion that the old gentleman had covertly noticed his flirting the evening before, and decided that he, as well as the young lady, would be none the worse for some Biblical instruction. At any rate, they both received it; and it was not until a gleam of daylight removed all danger of jail-breaking that he rose, unlocked the door, bade Badger a courteous and his daughter an affectionate "Good morning, dears," and went out to discharge from duty the horses that had been waiting so long for events that never came.

During the reading of the Holy Word poor Badger tried his best to keep his eyes off the beautiful prisoner in the corner; but she fascinated them there continually. Her tongue had no need to speak to him; her eyes were orators. They kept saying such things as these, and he, poor fellow, understood them only too well:

"Oh, you would do anything in the world for me, wouldn't you? I was to know whenever you could help me, even at the risk of your life, yes? Brave, gallant young man! A true knight of chivalry! If I had wanted to elope with *you*, now, you wouldn't have informed my father, after having consented to the plan, would you? And then you would no doubt have sneaked off and deserted me afterward. So glad you came along. You have helped me *so* much. Congratulations to the young lady *you* are engaged to. I had rather have Hughie's little finger in jail than your whole body, brain and soul, all at large."

She also quite often wiped her lips vigorously with a dainty handkerchief, and Badger understood this, too. She was trying to brush away the memory of that kiss of gratitude she had given him.

When our young hero, feeling very little like a hero, was finally released from the room, he went with true athletic agility to his own, and made hasty preparations for leaving the house. But just as he was at the head of the staircase, the thought struck him, Why? He had done nothing wrong, was in a true position; although deeply and thoroughly mortified and humiliated as he never had been before, he was conscious of no ill-doing. "I will stay and see it out," de-

cided he. And he flung himself on the bed, and slept until called to breakfast.

Apparently nobody but the three most interested knew of the events of the evening before. All seemed as bright, jolly and cordial as ever, and the family smiled on their attractive young guest who had made the preceding evening so interesting to them. "How little one-half a house knows what the other two-thirds is doing!" parodied Badger to himself. Even his fair and winsome fellow-actor in the comedy of the still small hours, came in, a little late, said "Good morning," as if nothing had happened, and was in the cosy sitting-room with the others when the old gentleman conducted the family devotions preliminary to breakfast.

The chapter seemed very long to Badger, as he had had a great deal of the same kind of pabulum so short a time before; and when asked to "join us in prayer," he did not feel up to himself in petitionary eloquence. He was rather noted among his associates as very efficient in invocation, but this time he felt considerably like a failure, and that he made the safe port of the "Amen" with the mere wreck of a prayer in tow. Just as the services closed, and the family rose from their knees to their feet, the sound of a wagon at the gate was heard.

A sturdy, prosaic-looking man at last entered, who was greeted calmly by the courteous old gentleman as "Sheriff Davidson." He had with him a very meek, inoffensive-looking young man, who looked about as much like a robber as a plate of unbaked doughnuts would.

As they entered, the young lady with whom Badger had had his experience of the night before, gave a pathetic little screech, and flung herself all over the young fellow, and never ceased kissing him till she had him on the sofa with her, sitting arm in arm.

"You see, sir," said Sheriff Davidson, addressing the head of the family, but awkwardly, "this is a dumbed queer an' inconsistent case. This 'ere young feller has been in jail two months for stealin' goods that another feller took, an' that he didn't know nothin' about till they was found, the goods in his room in his cousin's house, an' the horse in the woods back of his great-uncle's farm. It was first-class proof, as circumstantial evidence goes, and he was on his way to state's

prison to-morrow as sure as cud be. Guilty as a dog, if *ever* a feller was guilty by circumstantial evidence. But last night, about one o'clock in the mornin', some fellers tried to break jail an' git out. One on 'em was shot, an' they all was bagged ag'in. The jay that was clipped thought he was goin' to die, an' the doctor thought so, too, awhile, just to see if he wouldn't confess somethin'. He was a superstitious, sentimental sort of feller, and insisted on recountin' of his whole life—a darned mean life it was, too. Among other things, he gave us sure clues, so's we've found out that this young feller was as innocent of ever tryin' to do anything ag'in the law as that young lady there, a-settin' again him. It's all been put on him, an' very ingenious, too. He's goin' to be let out on his own responsibility, after breakfast, an' will be set free reg'lar in a few days. I tried to git him to keep quiet, but he said No, he must give you folks down here the information that he wasn't a thief, before he slep' or et, an' so I come out with him this early, provid'n' he won't sue nobody for false imprisonment or anything connected with the mistake."

The young fellow had suffered so keenly and so unjustly, that the heart of the sympathetic family melted towards him. Consent was obtained to a marriage in the family at the ensuing Christmas, or thereabouts; and Badger was invited to be the best man, and bring his best girl from Wilmington, Delaware. The young lady behaved very well, in the midst of her unexpected proud triumph; and only said, as she bade her midnight fellow-conspirator a warm, cordial goodbye, with not half as much regret in it, though, as he could have liked:

"You see, I was right; poor Hughie is a good, true hearted boy, as well as the most lovable one in the world. He wouldn't steal, any sooner than you or I would. And you were right, too; for if we'd tried to help him out, we might have been discovered the same as the counterfeitters were, as we should have been there about the same time; might have got mixed up with the gang, in fact, and been arrested for breaking jail. *Good-bye*, be sure and come at Christmas."

And Badger muttered, as he started for the next house, with the usual every-day hope that geographical knowledge might be in demand there, "*May be* I will."

A MATTER OF COURSE*

It was the middle of the second week after "Henley." That is how my friend Clewer would fix the date, I am sure. I am not a boating man myself, so perhaps I ought to explain how I came to be in solitary possession of a randan that Wednesday in the latter part of July. Clewer wanted it down at Datchet on the Saturday following, and was too busy to bring it down himself. Would I go to Henley and fetch it for him? I had nothing to do—so Clewer said. I might take all the week over it if I chose, so long as I reached Datchet by the Friday night. I decided that I ought to be able to manage the distance in somewhat less than that, and in fact I reached Monkey Island by the middle of the second day of my blistering journey. The sun had blazed upon me for a day and a half, and I had thoroughly enjoyed myself, and had not broken anything as yet or scraped the varnish off the randan very much either, which I considered to my credit, taking into account the fact that I had been absolutely unguided in every sort of way, and had not yet made up my mind whether I ought to sit on the stroke seat or the middle one. It had not occurred to me to ask Clewer about this previously, and I did not like to ask any one else.

Monkey Island did not attract me. It had an off-dayish and lonesome look, and though I like solitude, solitude in places which are usually thronged is oppressive. I thought I should prefer going on a bit and eating my own cold lamb and salad out of my own hamper. But I bought some bread and a couple of bottles of ginger-beer, and paid for the bottles for reasons which were unanswerable.

Lower down, however, the banks became comparatively uninteresting. On the tow-path side there was the tow-path with fields beyond, dusty and uninviting, and on the other more fields, apparently private property, which I was unwilling to desecrate. I selected the tow-path side after some deliberation, for I like the sun even in the middle of a blazing July day. I have noticed that this liking is common among

*The Story of a pleasant encounter. From Temple Bar.

Londoners. I landed my hamper with great precaution, drew the randan half out of water with all the care and conscientiousness which my inexperience and the respect I bore towards it and Clewer demanded, and then spread a napkin on the grass, and put my lamb on a plate in the middle and salad on another at the side, with the bread and a glass and knife and fork at proportionate distances. Then I put all the paper back into the hamper—I dislike paper around at a picnic—dipped my handkerchief into the water and wrapped it round one of the ginger-beer bottles to keep it cool, and regarded everything with calm satisfaction. As I said, I am fond of solitude and sun, and I was having as much of both as is possible to a man on the river Thames. So I sat down and said what I hope was an appropriate grace, remembering what Elia has written on the subject, and paused to give a look round before I began. I never ate any of that lunch.

For on the tow-path, coming towards me, my eyes caught a vision of a blue skirt surmounted by an enormous sheaf of red poppies clasped in front by two coarsely gloved hands. Over the poppies I had a glimpse of a broad-brimmed straw hat, but they hid the face beneath, and their possessor had almost passed me before her eyes met mine.

I do not know whether I ever want to see that face again. Clewer says I do, and as it was the most remarkably beautiful face I have ever seen, I suppose he is right; but I could argue to the contrary. The face was hot and flushed, and as she turned it towards me I noticed two little lines of perspiration trickling down from her temples to her cheeks. The beads had also gathered on her upper lip, which was prettily parted from the lower by the strain of her awkward burden.

She did not see my admiration for a moment, and then her eyes flashed down upon mine, calm and grey and unfathomable, and mine dropped on to the cold lamb directly and then rose again to her dusty shoes. I was sitting on the grass just below the tow-path.

She passed me and went on for ten or fifteen yards and then paused. She seemed to be deliberating. Then she came back and threw the bundle of poppies down beside me as I rose. My hat was in the boat, so all I could do was to stand up. She did not speak at once, but regarded my lunch and then myself. The combination apparently pleased

her ; at all events I do not think her satisfaction was attributable to the cold lamb alone ; and Clewer allows that I am not a vain man, especially when in the neighborhood of the river.

"I am so hot and hungry," she said quietly without a trace of affectation or confusion. "What will you do?"

I am usually struck speechless on emergencies, but something about this girl inspired me with unwonted confidence. In spite of her disarray she seemed so self-possessed and unembarrassed that I could not feel otherwise myself.

"You need not remain hungry very long," I replied. "Everything I've got is at your service." This was comprehensive, but strictly true I can swear.

"What a strange place you have chosen!" she said, disregarding my offer.

"Well, perhaps it is," said I; "but hardly unfortunate," I added, with a readiness that amazed myself; and looked up at her face again, to find the great grey eyes fixed upon me intently, reading me through.

She did not smile; she bowed slightly and sedately in acknowledgment.

"Thank you," she said. "There is a little shade the other side of the bank in the field. Will you carry it over there for me?"

"Certainly."

The change took about three minutes, during which she sat on the edge of the randan and fanned herself with her handkerchief. When I came and told her it was ready at last, I found her looking at the book I had brought with me. It makes an ordinary man blush to be discovered with a book of poetry in his possession. I blushed, and hoped the sunburn would hide it.

"You have been reading 'Lady Geraldine's Courtship,'" she said. "My name is Geraldine." My presence of mind began to fail me. "I always liked that piece so much," she added.

Then she came and sat down on the bank in front of the cold lamb and looked at it.

"There does not seem to be very much of it," she said, and the first smile she had given me broke round her mouth. I can eat all that myself."

"And why not?" I answered.

"What will you do?"

"Oh! there is the bread and some lettuce," I said. "That is quite enough. Besides, I can go on to Surly and lunch there."

"I would have gone on there and not troubled your generosity, but I have only twopence in my pocket," she said; "and I should have spent a penny in crossing."

"Please don't say troubled my generosity," I said.

"No, I did not mean to," she said quickly. "I think I would have stopped anyhow, for your lunch looked very tempting, and it is a mile or more on to Surly. You see, I crossed at Monkey Island and have been out in the fields gathering poppies, hoping to recross somewhere here, and it got later than I thought. I have two miles to walk on the other side."

"You must allow me to ferry you over afterwards," I said.

"Thank you."

As she ate up my lunch I had the opportunity of looking at her more closely. She recalled to my mind Tennyson's Maud, with her full underlip and "the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose." She was dressed in the plain blue skirt and a full white blouse tied in at the waist with a band of broad ribbon. She was tall, and her figure was as beautiful as her face, and the stately set of her head and the gracefulness of her slender neck most admirable. I am certain she wore no stays. I could not understand at all who she might be. Her hands belied the notion that she was an artist's model, as I was half inclined to think her at first, so fine and delicate were they. I had expected to be disappointed there, but I had been prejudiced perhaps by the coarse garden gloves. The conclusion that I came to was, that being a lady, in the most dignified sense of the word, she had been enabled to perceive some traits of the gentleman about myself, and having need of me, had seen no reason to conceal the fact. And as that was a very comfortable conclusion to arrive at, I made no attempt to construct another theory, but rested satisfied with the good fortune that had befallen me, and the absence of Mrs. Grundy, sensible old person though I am willing to admit her to be.

After a while I opened the bottle of ginger-beer and poured the contents into the tumbler for her.

"I will not be responsible for it," I laughed.

She put back the lock of brown hair, that was still moist with the dew of her forehead, with her left hand, and took the tumbler in her right, and answered, laughing, too, as she glanced gratefully at me:

"I must risk it. I am too hot to consider possible effects."

She drank it off daintily in two or three little gulps, and relieved me by saying that it was almost as good as my cold lamb. She seemed to have a most excellent appetite, as indeed I had expected from her healthy appearance, and I watched her with the greatest delight.

"You like Mrs. Browning then!" she asked suddenly.

"Indeed I do," said I.

"And 'Lady Geraldine's Courtship' particularly?"

"Particularly. That is a favorite with most people. It is so captivatingly sentimental and romantic that we can overlook the improbability of the story."

"What improbability?"

I admit I form opinions on grounds which seem insufficient when demanded of me with such suddenness. I hesitated.

"Perhaps you consider 'Lord Walter's Wife' improbable?" she went on.

I had no hesitation now.

"Yes." Her eyes dwelt on mine a moment.

"Which is improbable—the lady or the man?"

"The lady," I answered.

I have never seen such a dignity of merriment as her eyes displayed at my answer.

"You are hard upon him," she said, "and perhaps, by implication, still harder upon her. No that's not fair. But you must believe in Lord Walter's wife in future, or at least only disbelieve in the man."

I could not quite follow her; she thought too fast for me, but I remembered what she said afterwards, and thought over it, and I fancy that I have appreciated what she meant. At any rate I have certainly believed in the lady. Clewer laughed when I told him so once, not an unkind laugh. Clewer's laughter is never unkind.

She had finished her lunch, my lunch, and sat for a little while looking across the fields. I do not think she minded my looking at her, in fact I am inclined to believe that it was out of consideration for me and as a sort of recompense that she stayed to allow of my doing so.

But she turned her head towards me presently and said:

"I think I must ask you to take me over now." So I fetched my hamper and packed up my things, gathered up her poppies, and put them into the bows of the randan, and then, with an effort which disposed me to estimate the subsidence of the Thames since I landed as at least a foot, forced the boat out on to the water and drew it in sideways.

My Lady Geraldine stepped in lightly, and sat down on the cushions. I decided that the stroke seat was the right place for me after all.

"I think I see a road coming down to the river," I said, pointing fifty yards down stream to the right bank. "Shall I land you there?"

"If you please."

I proceeded to scull her along very carefully. I was anxious not to make an exhibition of myself, and my rowing is apt to splash sometimes. In five minutes I had put her ashore without disaster.

I bound up the sheaf of poppies with the string from my hamper, having first collected them out of the bows. It was during this collection that she remarked that I need not be so very careful over one or two, and a slight smile flickered round her mouth as she said so. I have those old poppies still, though I am not sure whether I received express permission to keep them.

She put the bundle under her left arm and her right hand into her pocket and produced a penny.

"My fare," she said, holding it out in the palm of her glove.

I hesitated a moment. I did not see why she should be particular about paying for her ferrying over in coin of the realm, considering that she had made no such return for her lunch. However, I recollected that my cold lamb was worth more than the twopence she possessed, and was glad of it, too. I took the penny; I have that penny, also, still.

"As for the rest," she said, "I can only thank you, and the best way to thank you is to take your kindness as a matter of course, isn't it?"

This was a way of looking at the matter which took my fancy; it was so entirely right and kind and womanly. Why do not more women treat us so? I bowed my assent. I had nothing to say. Perhaps I looked rather downcast at parting.

If I did I looked what I felt. She consoled me with another compliment.

"And I think," she added, "that, in spite of my telling you that I have two miles to walk, you will not offer to carry my poppies for me."

Not a suspicion of mockery came into her eyes as she said this. They were perfectly steady; and the words and her manner of speaking them conveyed such an expression of confidence in my readiness to appreciate and acknowledge the exact point at which my services ceased to be requisite, that I could only bow my assent to this also.

My silent acquiescence seemed to please her. She drew off her right glove, though with some difficulty, for the poppies hampered her, and held her hand out to me.

"Then good-bye," she said.

Our meeting had been so unconventional altogether that I felt I dared safely brave conventionality now without running the risk of being misunderstood. The old courtly act seemed too appropriate to the occasion to be looked upon as a liberty.

I took the tips of her fingers and bent my head down and kissed them. I gave her time to take them away, but she did not do so. On the contrary, she perceived my intention at once, and slightly raised them to meet me as I bent. Then she drew back, and, catching the skirt of her dress with the fingers I had just released, made me the most profound and wondrous courtesy. And considering the bundle of poppies, I think you will allow that she must have been a graceful woman not to have looked the least trifle awkward over the proceeding. Her eyes just glanced again at mine as she rose, and then she turned and walked away.

I did not stay to watch her to the bend of the road—I had received my dismissal—but tumbled back into the randan, and rowed off violently down stream.

I ran into the bank three times before I reached Surly. I think on the whole, that was excusable. And at Surly I had a four-o'clock lunch which restored me to my ordinary senses.

Clewer thanked me for bringing his boat down, and I thanked Clewer for allowing me to do so, and more besides. I considered myself largely indebted to Clewer.

And as for her—it does a man good in these days to be trusted by a woman after such a fashion, and that at a glance.

A NIGHT AMONG THE JUMBIES*

BY EUGENE MURRAY AARON, PH. D.

Witchcraft-ridden Jamaica, the "Pearl of the Antilles," has many a place of dread and dismal history locked up within its rocky, torrent-riven interior. Jumbies, the evil spirits of those who have met a violent death and who have never been accorded Christian burial, are as real to most of the African peasantry of that island as are the bananas and palms about them. No forsaken sugar estate, no ravine-scarred mountain side, no silent inaccessible summit is there but has its legends of dread manifestations, its record of mysterious disappearance, and its tales of murderous encounters. But of all these, from end to end of the country, no point is there where the black man so dreads to tarry as in or near the site of old Nannytown, where, more than a century ago, that chief of all the Maroons, Nanny, the redoubtable and invincible, for years held his little band of escaped slaves safe from the bloodhounds and blunderbusses of the sugar planters and rum distillers of the valleys below his mountain fastness.

Far up in the overtopping peaks of the Blue Mountain Range, where earthquake and cloud-burst have piled up a network of cross ranges that beggar description and puzzle the skilled surveyor, on a jutting promontory of adamant surrounded by a horseshoe curve of the Stony River, seething below, once nestled this home of the handful of freemen who were for years a terror and menace to the lowlands. A winding way skirting the face of the precipice, hardly fitted for the steady eye and sure foot of a mountain goat, was the only approach to their little village. Over this, with its vine-begirt passages and its sodden, slippery surface, where some tiny rivulet trickled down into the narrow, rocky trail, one at a time, in single file, the attacking forces must climb to this natural citadel. So it was that for many years these blacks were as free as such a restricted area made possible,

*A night of terror in a strange land. Written for Short Stories. Copyrighted.

and not until, from the surrounding heights, howitzers were brought to bear upon their stronghold did it become evident that they would be compelled in time to succumb to the improved barbarities of civilization. When, at last, through the treachery of one of their number, a more covered and less precipitous entrance to their territory was discovered, the poor wretches, with death by gun and sword and dog in front of them, were not long in choosing the boiling torrent, many hundreds of feet below them, as a last resting place; and the troubled, moaning waters of the Stony River ran red and bore their life blood far out upon the peaceful Carib Sea. It is natural that from that time this locality has been shunned by even the most intrepid or least superstitious of the natives, and not one among them is so brave as to be found within some miles of the locality after nightfall.

When, in company with an officer of the English army, I decided to spend a few days in that isolated wilderness, I found it quite difficult to get any one to accompany us either as guide or as carrier, and two blacks, who did finally agree to see us safely to our destination, specified with great particularity that they were not to be called upon to remain in the neighborhood of the old ruins later than the middle of the afternoon. Thus they would be given ample time to put many a mile between the haunted precinct and their resting place for the night. Only Rasheem Adeeb Sing, an East Indian coolie of the better class, could we find to accompany us and to agree to stay with us while we remained in the neighborhood that was so redolent of mystery. To Rasheem, with the mental superiority of his race, which lifts them so far above the uncultured Africans, the tales of vengeful spirits were as preposterous as they were to us. But he gave much more attention to the tales of travellers who had mysteriously disappeared in this wilderness than did we, and he was inclined to attribute their taking off to the hatred that the little remnant of the mountain Maroons, yet in that region, have for the lowlander who comes up there to spy out the land. This land is yet mainly the property of the government, and on it the Maroons live in true squatter sovereignty; hence the thought of its final taking up by growers of coffee, for which it is fitted in an eminent degree, is very hateful to them. To me the danger of real molestation from this source seemed *nil*, though I was quite ready to admit the likelihood

of their trying some crude trickery upon us, in the hope that we might be frightened from so gruesome a locality. Not so Rasheem; he went prepared for a hand-to-hand scuffle, and assured us and the guides that both the stilettos that he carried were most thoroughly steeped in a quick acting, virulent poison.

There was no use in our trying to impress the peasantry with the fact that insect collecting and botanizing were our real motives in visiting their mountain country. To them the idea that white men, who are all, in their minds, endowed with great wealth, can possibly earn a living, or even derive any passing enjoyment, from bug hunting or flower pulling, is far beyond their powers of conception. Either we were engaged in these most unusual occupations for the purpose of collecting materials for charms and magic potions, or we were simply using them as a blind for some other purpose, which induced us to visit their cloudland homes. In either case we were objects of grave suspicion, and this was made plain to us as we got further in from the beaten paths of commerce and of usual travel, by noticing that our motions were carefully watched from a distance by one or more of the natives.

Pedestrianism under a tropic sun is not very closely related to a stroll along a city promenade, and the hours consumed in leaving the lower levels of comparative civilization far behind and below us were hours of ceaseless toil that would have been utterly unbearable but for the beauties of view and vista constantly opening out as we got further and further above the fertile valleys of St. Thomas ye East, or for the wonderland of vegetation that was around us on every hand. At our very feet were the valleys of banana plantations, a scene of tireless motion as the torrid breezes played with the great oar-like leaves. Vieing with them in perpetual motion the mighty plume clumps of the giant bamboo waved and tossed and shivered, as though the great sea of vegetation was throwing up tall columns of verdant spray in its wild luxuriance and vigor. Here and there a mighty silk-cotton tree, now in bloom and a splendid mass of sheeny down, lifted its huge bulk far above its neighbors. Over it, or perhaps on some graceful mahogany, grew great parasitic vines with purple, or crimson, or orange flowers that transferred its host into one blaze of glory—a veritable giant torch among the prevailing greens. In the lowest levels, near the sea, oceans

of sugar cane were dotted here and there with white-walled, red-roofed houses, and were cut into regular squares of pale green malachite by ribbons of glistening silver where the irrigating canals intersected the fields. These also lent their pliant surfaces to keeping up the universal motion in answer to the pulsating rythm of the warm south wind. Higher up, on foot hill and rocky mountain side, coffee plantations, with the deep glossy green of their foliage plainly distinguishing them, bore witness by their extent to the profitableness of that crop in the virgin soil. Everywhere a species of century-plant had sent up tall columns of canary-yellow flowers; and flowering cactuses, orchids beyond count and beyond description, and giant tree ferns did their part in producing the indescribable effect of a tropic scene.

Before our house, of bamboo poles with palm-leaf thatch, was nearly finished our negro guide and carrier bid us a rather abrupt farewell; all the more abrupt as they assured us that they never expected to see us again nor find any faintest trace of our having visited the region after our first night. There could be no doubt, from reliable testimony gleaned by us in the parish town, that some of their tales of daring wild boar hunters, explorers or surveyors who had gone up into these regions, and who had never again been seen, were founded on at least a modicum of truth. But impressive as leave-taking should have been on their part, with this belief firmly fixed in their minds, the sudden discovery made by them that the sun was setting well down in the western sky and that already the shadows were visibly lengthening in the sombre valleys below, caused their precipitate and, to us, laughable retreat.

It was just on the verge of that quick dying glow, which in the tropics replaces our lingering twilight, when we finished our hut, had gathered fuel for our fire and swung our hammocks ready for the night. So it was by the firelight that we ate our supper of earth-cured wild boar, bananas, hardtack, guava jelly and mangoes; washing it all down with some cold, clear water from the Stoney, which Rasheem had managed to get for us. Watching him make his perilous way up and down the almost perpendicular cliffs, at the top of which we were camped, it was quite plain to me what might have become of some of those mysterious vanishers who had come up on to this perilous promontory. No white

man, unless long inured to hardships in the wilderness, could hope to safely scale the hundreds of feet of oozy granite walls, where patches of half-detached moss and heavy vines whose air roots left them without attachment to any stable thing, served but as death traps to the unwary climber. Even to Rasheem, lithe, wiry, bare of leg and body, free from treacherous shoe or impeding clothing, whose whole life had fitted him to face danger, found the task a severe test of his wonderful skill and hardihood.

If the twilight was of brief duration, the period of wakefulness after supper was even shorter. So tired were we all, after our day's experience in ascending into the clouds and building a house, that washing dishes, gathering wood for the needs of our fire at night, and thoughts of danger from man or beast, real or unreal, were all given the go-by, and, in a very short time three snores were added to the voices of the night, to the drone of the beetles, the shrill wheeze and purr of the cicadæ, the hoarse croak of the gecko lizards, the sharp chatter of the vampires, and all that multitude of deafening noises which are so characteristic of tropical wood-life. Strange and overpowering as are the sounds produced by this nocturnal choir, the explorer or naturalist soon becomes accustomed to them.

How long I had been asleep I do not know. Watches are useless things at best in a land where no one ever thinks of being on time, and doubly useless are they in the interior where are many who have never learned their use. So I knew neither the time of our retiring nor that when the cold awoke me. In these higher altitudes ice has been found at times, and 50° is by no means uncommon at 2 A.M. where 85° or over was registered by day.

Re-wrapping myself with greater care in my army blanket, I was just fixing myself for more rest when all thought of sleep was driven far from me by hearing what was most unmistakably a footstep, evidently not many yards away, followed by the slightest sound of bushes pushed aside. At once was opened a flood-gate of wild imaginings. Who could be out on these mountains, miles away from the nearest habitation, at this hour? Why was the step so gently made, and why was it not followed by another? Was it some one picking each step with great caution, and hence sneaking in on our little hut with a view to getting the lay of the land and taking a census of our party?

If that was it—and now another stealthy step made assurance doubly sure—what was the motive? Were we to be ambuscaded, openly attacked, or only made the victims of some huge scare? Somehow the latter idea found no favor in my heated imagination, and I was afforded much comfort by discovering that I had, in my haste to retire, not remembered to remove my holsters and brace of five-barreled Smith & Wesson automatic hammerless lead-drivers. As I silently turned on my side so as to face the open side of our hut and brought the pair of teasers around where I could draw a quick bead on anything that came into the range of the dim glimmering without, I heard another footfall—this time two, taken in quick succession, as though an open space had afforded room for two unobstructed steps. And immediately followed just the faintest forced breathing; but whether a whispered caution or an escaped sigh I could not say.

Then entire silence followed for some moments, unbearable by reason of their very freedom from unusual sound, during which my heart-beats were so audible that I almost mistook them for outside noises, and found myself wondering whether they could not be heard by the visitor without. For a while I lay debating in my mind whether I had really been wide awake, and whether I had not magnified the sounds, so long continued was the silence. Then again I heard a rustling of bushes, this time much nearer, and again came that peculiar sibilant sound which now was still more suggestive of a preconcerted signal. Were there a number surrounding us? If that was the case it was fortunate that in our sleepy forgetfulness we had allowed our fire to go out, and were not any more exposed than would be the attacking party. Quickly came another step, and then what was unmistakably the dull rattle of a chain.

Frightened as I had been before, congealed as was my blood and violent my heart's action, all my symptoms of general mental and moral collapse were multiplied fourfold. At once all conjecture as to the origin of the sounds became unnecessary in my blind fear; and the unreal, spirit nature of them was firmly fastened on my mind, though I was still sufficiently capable of reasoning to cause me to wonder that I had lived so long only to find out now, that the long since dead did walk. For had not Tacky, one of the boldest and most murderous of the Maroons of the last century, been

hung alive in chains from these very cliffs outside, and had he not been left there to die in the sweltering heat of the day and the pinching cold by night, while the vultures and vampires took turns in circling nearer and yet nearer as his strength to defend himself slowly ebbed from him? Eight days he hung there on the blistering crag, seen of hundreds for miles around, a token of Christian justice meted out to a negro who dared to fight for freedom. Then, when he died a death of torture far beyond words to portray, his winged tormentors fought over his fast rotting flesh, and one by one his bones fell into the gorge below.

But was that all? By many a native and by a few long resident whites I had been assured that well-founded tradition vouched for the fact that when the last bone fell all mysteriously disappeared, and that in time the chain was taken away in the night. Soon after, strange sounds came to be heard; stealthy steps, dragging chains, the sibilant swish of the great bats' wings, and then all Jamaica knew that Tacky haunted the scenes of his vain struggles for his race. One or two poor wretches, who had allowed their ardor in the boar chase to lead them too near his former haunts, had even seen a nameless shape of massive proportions, indistinct and seemingly without fixed form, go slowly, stealthily by dragging a coil of chain in one hand and in the other carrying the skull and bones that were needed to give his shadowy body coherence and permanent outline.

And it was this loathsome thing of dread that was slowly drawing nearer to us, perhaps bent on wreaking still other vengeance on us miserable white men who had dared to venture here, and remind his shade of those whites who had brought about his terrible death.

There came more footfalls, and now the chain could be distinctly heard as it was dragged along among the bushes. Now my reason began to desert me, and just as I had gathered all my fast expiring strength for a scream that should wake my still unconscious companions, there came just outside the hut such a sound as bankrupts our English alphabet and makes one envy the Chinese their many thousands of symbols. The rush of deafening sound and the revulsion of feeling that came with it was too much for me, and both of my pistols, already on the hair-trigger, went off with deafening reports.

"Ee-ah-haw, ee-ah-haw, (bang), ee-ah-haw, ee-ah-haw, (Boom!) haw, haw, haw, haw, yaah!"

Yes, undoubtedly it was a stray burro, the ubiquitous donkey, one or more of which belong to every household, however humble, throughout the island. The silence between the footfalls as it nibbled at the slightly shaken bushes, the dragging chain and the sibilant breathing, so like a whispered call or swish of a wing, were all explained. They all dawned on me in a flash of thought, as such ideas do; but too late, for it took much longer to get my thoroughly affrighted companions to realize that they had not been awakened by a series of warwhoops and the rapid firing of an attacking party. But frightened as they were, the bearer of that chain, I have reason to think, was even more so. For after we had all subsided into the stage of an occasional chuckle at the utter ridiculousness of it all, far away in the distance came back the sound,

"Ee-ah-haw, ee-ah-haw; haw; haw, haw, haw, yaah!"

Verily his ass-ship had been travelling at a good round pace in the interlude between his first and second song.

Four days afterwards, as we were homeward bound, we passed a mouse-colored jackass browsing on the spines of a cactus, and dragging behind him about twelve feet of chain.

"That is the brute that scared you out of a decade's growth, I fancy," said the Captain.

And I thought I saw, as I passed on, the burro give me a knowing wink.

Still further down we met a tired, way-worn old negro; and thus ran his tale of woe:

"Maanin', is any o' yo' seen nuthin' o' no' old jack wid a chain on? Or is yo' hearn him? Yo's boun' to hear his bugle if he blowed whare yo' is ben; for, befo' de good Gawd, if he ever do blow it when de Angul Gabriel blows his horn, den none o' us will eber know de last day is cum."

Quashie evidently owned that mouse-colored demon on the mountain side, and well the old man knew its song.

JUMPING A CLAIM*

BY ALFRED E. KEET

It was New Year's eve in the camp and the Gold Nugget saloon was doing a heavy business all along the line. Drinks were being rapidly dispensed over the counter, and in the rear faro, roulette, and draw-poker were flourishing.

"Pete" was in high humor. He had "bucked the tiger" successfully to-night, and had quit enough ahead to work his claim in Corkscrew Gulch.

True, he had not done his assessment-work this year and by law anybody could "jump" the "Lone Star" that very day at midnight. But Pete was not the man to be fooled with, as he already had two graves to his credit in Doc. Turner's ranch (the name applied to the cemetery in honor of a local doctor), which contained the bodies of two "tenderfeet" who had "differed" with him and were accidentally (?) shot. So the inhabitants of Galensville concluded he was a safe man to let alone, and he laughed at the idea that anybody would be so foolish as to "commit suicide," as he termed it, by attempting to jump his claim.

The old year had but a few minutes to live when "Hank" tied up his horse among the tall, snow-laden pine trees near the "Lone Star," and loosening the thongs which fastened a pick to his horse's saddle, and transferring a couple of sticks of dynamite and some candles from his saddle-bag to his pockets, he shouldered the pick and slowly mounted the tortuous trail.

He had long awaited this moment. Four years ago he had owned the "Lone Star" himself; but sickness came and he could not work his assessment, and when he returned to the prospect and found Pete, armed to the teeth, in possession, he had accepted his hard luck with a good grace, but had "laid" for Pete ever since. But now at last his opportu-

*A dramatic sketch of a Western miner's crime. Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

nity had come, and he determined to regain his property, and defend it at the risk of his life if necessary.

The tunnel was soon reached, and the moonlight, streaming aslant its black mouth, easily disclosed to his eyes Pete's location stake.

He looked at his watch. It marked exactly midnight.

Reaching down he fiercely wrenched the stake from the ground and flung it far from him down the mountain.

He then lit a candle and finding a board, quickly sharpened one end of it, and smoothing off the broad end wrote his location notice on it; rechristening the claim the "Bright Hopes," and planted the stake firmly in the ground.

Thinking he would go into the tunnel to the "breast" and "see how she looked," he took up his candle and pick and started in.

Just as he did so he thought he heard a whistle. He paused and listened: someone was coming up the trail below whistling softly. Quickly dousing the light he crouched behind a big boulder just at the mouth of the tunnel, and drew his revolver.

A few moments later Pete stepped in view, with a week's supplies in a sack slung over his shoulder.

Before he could put his burden down, Hank suddenly rose up before him with the muzzle of his pistol almost touching the other's face.

"Hands up!" he cried, "I've got the drop on yer now."

Pete swore a horrible oath, but seeing the other man had a full hand, promptly threw up his, while Hank deftly relieved him of his fire-arms.

"'Taint worth fighting about anyhow," said Pete, carelessly. "There ain't a pound of ore in the hull claim."

"Oh come off," said Hank; "how about all that ore you shipped last summer?"

"That was out of a pocket I struck which petered out mighty quick; but if you don't believe me I'll go in the hole and show you," and taking a candle Pete started in the tunnel, Hank following, but keeping his hand within easy reach of his gun.

The breast of the tunnel was soon reached, and Pete, holding his candle up before it, said, "There now, what did I tell yer; it's nuthin' but dead rock."

Hank took his candle and carefully examined the breast, roof and sides, but not a trace of mineral could be seen.

"You're welcome to her," said Pete; "I've blown in all the money I want to: you can have a blast at her now, if yer want to."

Hank did not reply, but appeared to be lost in thought; finally he said, "Hold my candle a minute, Pete," and taking up his pick in both hands he struck the breast a heavy blow, and the rock and mud with which wily Pete had plastered it to fool curious and unwelcome visitors fell away, exposing a vein of glittering white metal.

Almost at the same instant there was a deafening report and Hank fell to the ground with a bullet through his heart.

Pete, with the smoking revolver in his hand, which he had snatched from Hank's belt as he struck the blow, stood over him with a grim smile, as he muttered, "another accident!"

But retribution was close at hand.

The reverberations of the shot had hardly died away among the neighboring peaks when a rock, which had long been loose, started by the sudden shock fell from the roof, bringing tons of earth with it, and Pete and his third victim were crushed into a shapeless mass.





THE PARCHMENT OF THE MOORISH DOCTOR*

BY ÉMILE SOUVESTRE

A traveller said once, in speaking of the Spanish posadas, that they were a sort of shelter, where men, by courtesy called innkeepers, furnished you for the night with smoke and vermin. Another added, that in the country of the Cid, the hosts did not feed their guests, but the guests fed their hosts. And still another traveller said that those strangers who wished to pass through the western provinces of the Iberian Peninsula should carry their own beds, unless they wished to sleep in sheets which were sewed to the greasy wool mattresses, and only changed once a year, in the Spring.

Whether these reports of the discomforts of travel in Spain may or may not be exaggerated, it is nevertheless true that

*Translated from the French, by Caroline D. Sawyer, for Short Stories. Copyrighted. Illustrations after Daniel Vierge.

the posadas of to-day are infinitely superior to those which were common in that country two centuries ago. At that epoch they were simply caravansaries frequented by muleteers, who found them a resting place for themselves and their trains of mules. The better class of them had only, besides the stable and the rough dining-room, a garret divided in several compartments, called chambers, to which one mounted by a ladder.

Into one of these rooms entered, one day in Spring, Don José d'Alcantra, a Spanish hidalgo, who had been graduated from the University of Salamanca and had a doctor's diploma, but who possessed nothing else in the world excepting the suit of clothes he had on, a few dollars in money, and a very fair opinion of his own merit.

Although he was only a little over thirty, he had tried various professions, without finding in any of them that opulence which he thought would have suited him quite as well as any one, and he had now returned to Leon, in the hope of finding employment with the Count Don Alonzo Mendos, who possessed, between Toro and Lamora, a magnificent estate, which our doctor had once visited. Unfortunately he learned, in the first questions which he addressed to his host, that the Count was dead, and he was still under the weight of his surprise and disappointment at the moment of the opening of our story.

"Don Alonzo dead!" he repeated in stupefaction.

"Dead and buried," replied the innkeeper, "most splendidly buried, too, as became a man of his rank."

"Then the castle is occupied by his heirs?"

"The heir was his nephew, and he has placed the property in the hands of a notary at Argelles to be sold. If I do not mistake, the sale takes place to-morrow."

Don José bethought himself that the new owner would probably need help in regulating his domain, and possibly might be disposed to avail himself of his services. He therefore decided to await at the posada the result of the next day's sale.

The innkeeper highly applauded this sage decision, and assured him that he would find it simply impossible to obtain better cooking or better lodging elsewhere. He strengthened his assurance by calling the attention of the most noble Don to the many and great conveniences of the chamber which he had given him.

The room was, indeed, well ventilated, inasmuch as three of the panes of glass were gone from the window (it had only four), and one enjoyed a most extended sky-view, the casement being placed in the roof. As to its furniture, its merit consisted chiefly in a simplicity which did not fatigue the memory, nor bewilder the fancy. A wooden bed with a thin mattress, a rickety stool, and a shaky table were its sum total; the various intervals in the framework formed, however, as the host complacently remarked, a number of compartments, which rendered quite superfluous any such fripperies as closets or drawers.

The greater part of these corners were full of discolored rags, pots of earth, glass vials, and, which greatly surprised Don José, books and papers. In answer to his wondering questions, the hotel keeper told him that the chamber had been occupied for some months by an old doctor, who spent his time in studying, in distilling essences from plants, and in writing. But, suspicions having arisen that he was of Moorish descent, and the last decrees of the king having ordered specifically the expulsion from the Kingdom of all the descendants of that race, he had been obliged to flee, leaving behind him all his effects, that is, his bottles, his books and his papers.

When the innkeeper had finished his recital, and taken his departure, and Don José was alone, he could not help thinking of the long series of accidents and misfortunes which had thus far clogged his life.

"I have tried," he said, bitterly, "everything in vain; fate has ceaselessly thrown herself in the way of all my hopes, and made me the slave of circumstances. Ah, how happy is the man who can follow his will, rule events, and be the King of his own life, instead of making it subject to every one!"

As these reflections filled him with gloom and sadness, he sought to banish them by an examination of the books of the Moorish doctor. The first which he opened was an exposition of the system of Nature, written in Latin. José read several pages, then took up another, which treated of the occult sciences, and finally, he found that still another was on the same theme.

The choice of these books indicated clearly that the old doctor was an alchemist, if not a necromancer, for at this

time it was not rare to find men, especially in Spain, who had studied deeply into the art of gaining control of the invisible powers.

Rendered curious by the results of his search, Don José passed from books to manuscripts. He looked through several, which seemed to contain only general instructions on the transmutation of metals; but, finally, he found inclosed in a leaden case a roll of parchment whose first words impressed him deeply; they were magical receipts for accomplishing miracles, such as rendering one's self invisible, transforming one's self at will, passing in an instant over great intervals of space; finally he arrived at a paragraph which had for its heading:

"The way to make your wishes sovereign laws, capable of instant execution."

The young doctor bounded from his seat with joy.

"By the true cross," he cried, "if that receipt is worth anything, what more can one want? To make our wishes capable of realizing themselves! Isn't that the extreme of human felicity? Let us see if it can be done without compromising one's soul."

He read slowly and carefully the receipt given in the manuscript, and found nothing in it inconsistent with his faith, nothing which savored either of Moorish delusions or of impious trafficking with the great enemy of souls. All that was required, according to the formula, was to pronounce, before going to sleep, a certain prayer, and to drink the contents of a little flask, hidden at the bottom of the leaden case.

José sought with breathless eagerness for the vial, found and opened it, and saw that it contained a few drops of a dark and odorous liquid. He hesitated a moment before tasting it, not because he doubted the potency of either formula or receipt, his opinions on those subjects being those commonly held at that time, but from a desire to make no mistake in trying the virtues of this miraculously found talisman. He therefore read again with the utmost care, weighing each word, the lines which he had deciphered on the parchment, and, in addition to those, a postscript unnoticed before. This was composed of these words only:

"Our impotence is the barrier providentially raised by God Himself against our folly."

"Ah!" murmured Don José, with all a Spaniard's scorn-

ful contempt for the down-trodden Moor. "Ah, how those fanatics loved to scoff at everything sacred! Those words are simply a gibe, a bitter sneer. Would the old doctor have given up the power of having every wish realized, any more than I, a son of the Church, am willing to do? Not he, Mohammedan dog! However, his levity doesn't concern me; I greatly prefer trying his receipts."

He accordingly lifted the flask to his lips, drank its contents with one swallow, and then solemnly repeated the long formula pronounced necessary by the parchment. He had hardly finished it when his eyes closed and he fell into a deep slumber.

Don José did not know how long he had slept, when he first became fairly conscious that the morning light was pouring through the skylight into his room. He was only partly awake, however, and it was some time before he became fully aware of his surroundings. Finally his ideas cleared, and the sight of the roll of parchment and of the empty flask, recalled to his memory the events of the previous evening. As he saw no change, however, either in himself or anything about him, he was forced to believe that there was no magic in the formula, and that the magnificent promise of the Moorish receipt was but an idle boast.

"Ah," he sighed, "still another delusion. I wake in my attic, with my only suit of clothes and my empty purse! And, God knows how ardently I desired before going to sleep, that I might find that purse overflowing with riches when I woke."

He did not finish his sentence; his eyes had wandered from the beam, where he had hung his garments, and they now fell upon his leathern purse, which projected from the pocket of his overcoat, and which seemed to be literally bursting with gold.

He rose, shaking with excitement and the terrible dread that his senses were deceiving him, rubbed his eyes that no mists might be before them, and then sprang forward, caught the purse and emptied it in one shower upon the bed. It was full of gold, more gold than he had ever possessed or, indeed, had ever seen. The philter had produced its promised effects; henceforth his wishes alone were the limit of his possessions.

Anxious to make a second trial of his power, he desired that his bare garret should be transformed into a sumptuous chamber, and his threadbare clothing into a rich velvet suit, lined with the heaviest satin. His wish was at once accomplished. Then he demanded a breakfast suitable for an archbishop, served by small negro lads, clothed in bright scarlet. Immediately, a splendid repast covered a table,



which suddenly appeared glittering with silver and glass, and a body of negroes entered, their shining skins and lustrous eyes set off by their brilliant red livery. For some time he continued the trial of his new power in every way. Finally he became convinced that his will had really become a supreme power, and, almost intoxicated with joy, he sprang up and dashed out of the inn.

It was then true that the little roll of parchment had made him, in a few hours, richer than the richest, more powerful than the mightiest! *He could do whatsoever he would!* What meaning did those words convey, and as he repeated them, how his heart swelled with exultation! What, in comparison with him, were kings, emperors, even the pope himself! All these were limited by established laws, by the laws of the possible, whilst as to him there was no limit to his power excepting such as his fancy chose to impose! Ah, what a secret that old doctor had found out, and what would his sensations be, if he knew that another was realizing its priceless worth. What a blessing it was, moreover, that the magic parchment had not fallen into the hands of an ignorant man, one who was greedy, avaricious, and the slave of violent passions! How merciful it was that it had become the property of an hidalgo, reasonable in all his wishes, strong in his self-control, and a learned doctor of the University of Salamanca. Humanity could re-assure itself on that score! Don José d'Alcantra respected himself too thoroughly to ever abuse his unlimited power. In according the favor to him, Providence had evidently considered his merit, and he was thoroughly decided to justify the wise selection that had been made by the loftiness of his life. He resolved to give a first proof of his intentions by moderating his ambition. In his place, another would probably have willed at once to be a king with a palace and a court, troops of loyal subjects and an army. Don José was an enemy, however, on principle, to a great display of grandeur. He decided that he would content himself with buying the estate of Don Alonzo Mendos, and would live there as a true and modest philosopher, with several millions, the title of count, and the privileges of a Spanish noble.

He started at once, after coming to a decision, for the village of Argelles, where the sale of the castle was to take place.

The road which he took led as well to Toro, and it was full of peasant women, muleteers and merchants who were going there. As he walked along, looking about him, Don José made numberless slight experiments of his new-found powers. To a bright and joyous young girl he wished a happy meeting with her friends; to an old man, walking feebly, a seat in a passing carriage; to a beggar, a piece of gold suddenly

falling at his feet, and all was immediately accomplished. Encouraged by his success, he passed from the rôle of guardian angel to that of archangel.

From aiding, he passed to judging. He chastised the soldier, whose air was saucy and menacing, by a gust of wind which blew his hat into the river; the muleteer who was too lavish

with his whip, by frightening his mules and dispersing them over the country; the man of title, who looked arrogantly from his chariot upon the foot-passers, by rudely crushing his wheels. In all of this, Don José obeyed his first impressions, distributing rewards or punishments, as the manner of a person pleased or displeased him, meting out his justice entirely by inspiration.

He arrived, after this fashion, in sight of the Castle of Mendos, whose magnificent woods bordered the road. Wishing to escape the heat, which was now becoming oppressive, he left the highway, and entered the domain, taking a path which led through it to the village.



It was a glorious summer day; the hedges were covered with flowers, and the forest resounded with the song of myriads of birds. Some wood cutters, encamped in huts, constructed of boughs, were making different articles of domestic use from the fallen wood. Don José decided that when the property was his, he should make many changes, in accordance with his more extended views. He even stopped and drew the plan of a rustic lodge, which should be at once highly picturesque and extremely comfortable. When he reached the meadows, he found that the system of irrigation was very imperfect, and he immediately decided upon an enlarged plan, and again stopped to calculate the great increase

of profit which would accrue to him. With the vineyard he was better pleased, indeed, quite satisfied, and he quoted approvingly a great number of verses from Horace and from the Scriptures, which led him naturally to the consideration of that hotly-contested question, whether the wine manufactured by Noah was white or red. The corn fields he decided to transform into pastures for his herds, and he also planned to turn, by the aid of modern science, the marsh-land into grain fields.

He had reached thus far in his plans, as the new owner, when a curt and imperious voice asked who gave him permission to pass through the domain of Mendos.

He turned and perceived a young man whose costume betokened high rank. He was mounted upon an Andalusian horse, very handsome and richly comparisoned.

As Don José took the time for examining him, which, in etiquette, he should have used in replying, the young nobleman repeated the question with considerable impatience. The graduate of Salamanca smiled with that tranquil and assured air which the knowledge of power gives.

"Is permission necessary to visit an estate without an owner?" he asked.

"Who told you that such was the case here?"

"Those who informed me that Perez, the notary at Argelles, was to sell it to-day."

"Then you visit it as a purchaser?"

"As a purchaser."

"Do you know its price?"

"I expect to know very shortly."

"It is estimated at a hundred thousand pounds."

"The property is worth more than that."

The young man burst into a laugh. "Upon my soul," he said, ironically, "here is a wealthy buyer, and one who travels in quite a modest way, considering his opulence."

"I am in the habit of walking," replied Don José, with an air of princely suavity.

"You are too humble altogether," replied the young man, "your Highness would be much more comfortable, really, upon my mare."

"Do you think so?" asked Don José, seized with a sudden fancy.

"I am so sure of it that I am tempted to alight and offer you my mount," cried the cavalier, in a mocking tone.

"It is easy to satisfy you," replied the doctor, "and since it is your wish, I desire that you shall come down."

Instantly the alezan plunged and threw the young gentleman to the ground.

"You frightened my horse," he said, rising, pale with wrath.



"I aided him in the accomplishment of your announced intentions," replied Don José, who had seized the bridle, and was preparing to mount the alezan.

The young man sprang forward with his uplifted whip. "Stand back, you rogue, or I will thrash you," he cried, mad with passion.

The blood mounted to the brow of Don José. "The Señor forgets that he is speaking to an hidalgo," he said haughtily, "and that I, as well as he, wear a sword."

"Show, then, that you know how to use it," cried the cavalier, unsheathing his, and advancing upon the doctor.

On any other occasion Don José would have made an attempt at conciliation, but the menace of the young stranger had stirred his wrath, whilst the certainty of having nothing to fear gave him an unwonted degree of courage.

He thought, moreover, that his adversary needed a lesson, and he therefore wished for him a wound capable of making him see the folly and sin of giving way to his temper. His wish was instantly realized; the young nobleman dropped his sword with an exclamation of pain and rage. Don José, who had desired that the wound should be a light one, did not distress himself about it, but wishing to complete the lesson by playing out his part, gravely excused himself to the cavalier for his part in the transaction, adding that he should bear him no rancor, and to prove it, would accept the offer he had made previous to their dispute.

He then mounted the horse, bowed ceremoniously to its owner, and putting spurs to the high-mettled animal, sped swiftly away.

This occurrence greatly heightened the good opinion which Don José already entertained of himself. He had bewildered a man and fought him! Really, his wit and bravery were far greater than he had suspected. Moreover, he knew now, for an absolute certainty, that nothing whatever could oppose his will; that it was permitted to him to crush all opposition, humble all pride, and he was already so habituated to the thought that it had ceased to astonish him. The only thing that did surprise him in this connection was the thought of any opposition to his will. He felt that he could not brook it for an instant; he looked upon it as a revolt against his legitimate rights. So strong was his feeling on this score that he was tempted to slay at once a mule-driver, who did not turn out swiftly enough as he was passing through the village. The instincts of tyranny were rising in his soul, like an incoming tide.

He presented himself to the man of business, charged with the sale of the castle, far less as a purchaser seeking information than as a master about to take possession of his own. Unfortunately, in his first words, the notary made known to him the fact that the domain was no longer for sale.

The disappointment of the doctor may be imagined. This estate, for which he had planned so many improvements, and in which he intended to make so many changes, was now, it

would seem, about to escape him. All his day dreams, his plans, his poetical reminiscences, were rather a mockery of him, *the man whose will became sovereign law!* It was impossible! The mere idea of such an obstacle filled him with intense indignation, and with impatient hauteur he demanded the reason why the property was no longer for sale.

"Because Don Henriquez, the nephew of the Count, has just fallen heir to two inheritances, and the re-establishment of his fortunes has decided him to keep the estate of Mendos."

"What!" replied Don José, "no matter how large a price was offered?"

"He would refuse it."

"You are sure?"

"He told me so himself this morning."

"He is here, then?"

"He has just departed on horseback for the castle."

Don José saw at once that the heir was his unknown cavalier, and he could not repress an exclamation. The notary offered some sympathetic condolence for the disappointment that was so very evident, and added that Don Henriquez was very desirous to retain the place on account of the hunting.

"Zounds!" said Don José to himself, angrily, "I ought to have wounded him, so that he would have lost all inclination for sport."

He added, aloud, that such a motive might not prevent Don Henriquez from accepting certain propositions.

"The estate suits him," replied the notary, "and it certainly is a charming property. It has in the first place a commanding position."

"I am well acquainted with the place," interrupted Don José, curtly.

"Woods, fields, meadows——"

"I have seen them all," said the doctor with renewed impatience, as the enumeration stirred afresh his covetousness.

"Ah!" said the notary, "but has the señor seen the interior of the castle since it was repaired and re-decorated by the late count? There is, in the first place, a gallery of pictures, the work of our most eminent painters."

"Pictures!" cried Don José; "I have always adored pictures—although I prefer statues."

"The castle is full of them."

"Can it be possible?"

"Not to mention the library."

"There is a library?" ejaculated the doctor.

"Of thirty thousand volumes."

Don José made a gesture of despair. "That such a treasure should be wasted," he sighed; "that such an arsenal of science should remain in the hands of a dunce, for this Don Henriquez must be an ignorant man."

The notary shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah! ah!" said he, lowering his voice, "your worship knows what a young man of family, rich, and fond of pleasure, is likely to be."

"I was sure of it," interrupted Don José. "He is a worthless fellow."

"He has good qualities, many of them; but he is a little quick in his temper, and consequently he has had several affairs with other gentlemen."

"Just what I thought! a brawler and a duellist!" cried the doctor; "I should have known it."

And he added to himself; "It would be simple justice to take away from him the means of continuing such a life, by depriving him of the hand that holds the sword."

"Time will moderate his transports," said Perez, "and also, I hope, the extravagant habits of his lordship. Notwithstanding his wealth, he is always embarrassed; he has already exacted from his uncle's tenants all arrears of rent."

"Have they paid?"

"With great difficulty, for the harvests have been almost a total failure."

"But that is downright cruelty!" cried José, sincerely indignant. "What! press poor people who are pinched by



want, when one has a princely fortune, a castle filled with rare works of art and a library of thirty thousand volumes! Such a man is a veritable scourge, and it would be most desirable in the interests of the whole world that Spain should be delivered——”

He was interrupted by a noise of steps and voices resound-



ing from the stairway, and by the sight of a servant who dashed precipitately into the room, white with fear.

“What is the matter?” cried the notary, springing up.

“A frightful misfortune! Don Henriquez has just been fighting!”

“Again!”

“And he was wounded.”

“Dangerously?”

"No; but, as he was pursuing his opponent, who had escaped with his horse, he fell in such a way as to aggravate his wound, and he fainted in the highway."

"And has he just been found?"

"A waggoner, who passed without seeing him, roused him from his fainting-fit by running over him and crushing his right hand."

"The saints preserve us!"

"He was, however, taken up to be brought here."

"Then he is safe now?"

"Alas! in passing through the courtyard a moment ago, under the scaffolding of the masons, a stone was loosened from the roof and fell, wounding him mortally."

Don José listened in horror; he shrank back like a man suddenly overwhelmed with a frightful light. All that had just passed had been his work. He had wished, in the first place, that Don Henriquez's wound should be too grave for him to enjoy any sport; then he had desired the loss of the hand that held the sword, and then his death, in the interests of all; and three successive accidents had at once responded to these three wishes! So, after having tortured and maimed a man, he had finished by killing him! That thought flashed through his heart like a thrust from a sword. He would have repulsed it by crying out that the thing was impossible, but at that moment the door opened, and four servants appeared, bearing the lifeless, bloody corpse of the young count.

Don José could not endure the awful sight; he sank back fainting upon his seat, whilst everything about him disappeared from his horrified gaze.

When he again became aware of his surroundings he found himself upon his straw pallet in the attic of the inn, with the first rays of the morning's sun streaming upon him from his skylight.

His first feelings were those of gratitude and joy at having escaped that terrible sight; then, as the memory of the events of the previous evening came back to his mind, he understood what had happened.

The potion taken on the faith of the Moorish doctor was one of those powerful narcotics, which, in heightening our faculties during sleep, transform into dreams the habitual preoccupations of our minds. All that he had taken for reality,

so intensely powerful had it been in its life-like seeming, had simply been the charm of an opiate.

Don José meditated in silence for some time; then he took up the roll of parchment, which was still lying upon the bed, read it again, stopped at the sentence he had so despised the evening before, read it slowly several times, and finally, shaking his head with an air of conviction:—

"This is a salutary lesson," he said, "by which I shall profit, if I am wise. I have always believed that in order to be happy, it was only necessary to be able to do the thing I wished to do. I did not stop to think that man's will, when it owns no submission to a higher power, but is simply a law unto itself, passes swiftly from selfishness to wanton arrogance, from wanton arrogance to tyranny, from tyranny to merciless cruelty. The Moorish doctor was not the scoffer I thought him to be. It was rather in a spirit of reverent recognition of a divine truth, that he wrote those words I so mocked at last night, that—"*Our impotence is the barrier providentially raised by God Himself against our folly.*"

This dream was sufficiently salutary in its effects upon Don José to make him accept more patiently his humble fortune, and to strive to worthily fill the place assigned him in life; and when he died, many years after, it was as the faithful steward of the property, of which he had hoped to be the master



HOW CHARLEY FOUND HIS COURAGE*

BY W. H. CRESSINGHAM.

Joseph Simpson swooped down on the range country, built himself a little shack in the bottom of an arroya where bubbled a spring, and then started in the cattle business. He had one poor flea-bitten galloway and one broncho. The broncho was a pinto, watch-eyed and sprung-kneed, and all down his right side were the brands of his previous owners, with their counter brands, reaching from his ears to his fly-disturber, and all over his left side were numerous mathematical calculations, with an occasional sign of the zodiac burned in by way of variety. The galloway cow looked so lonesome, and the pony was so dejected, that Joseph Simpson did the best he could the next spring—rustled around before the regular round-up started, and the result was a numerous progeny for the friendless cow and the dejected pinto. Joseph Simpson's success only served to whet his ambition, and so he went on increasing his cow and horse herds; but, strange as it may appear, as the blank page of Joseph Simpson's increase books were rapidly filling, his neighbors noted corresponding falling off in the census of their respective herds.

The following winter the galloway got nipped in a blizzard, and the pinto also sank to rest under his weight of years. The next spring Joseph Simpson formed a cattle trust. The capital stock comprised the now numerous relics of the late galloway and pinto, and one corporate seal. There were no certificates, so the seal was heated red-hot and impressed on the stock itself. Sometimes it was impressed over the brands of the legal owners, but most of the time it only came in contact with mavericks. Cattle men were opposed to the movement, but it flourished nevertheless, and the property of the trust went on increasing to an extent almost startling. "Rustler Joe," as the president, vice-president, secretary and range foreman of the cattle trust was now known, was of such an impulsive, sensitive nature that

*The Story of a Cattle Trust. Written for Short Stories. Copyrighted.

people hesitated to take the initiative and converse with him on the subject. One man did mention the matter, and the way that Rustler Joe handled his nickel-plated, self-cocking articles of incorporation caused such a coolness to spring up that the man never spoke of the trust again. In fact, he never spoke at all.

Then Joe took to himself a partner. Where that partner came from nobody knew, but there he was—tall, handsome, long dark curling hair and mustache, he was certainly an ideal of physical manhood to the range riders of the neighborhood. And, then, his spurs were of solid silver and had little silver bells hanging from them; his sombrero was of the finest Stetson make and the crown was encircled by a bullion band; his revolvers were silver-plated and pearl-handled, and his saddle was silver mounted, with gold embossed on the top of the horn. People looked wise and said that masses were being said for the soul of the Mexican that had owned that saddle, but they were careful not to talk too loud. The partner was known as Charley. While Joe was the possessor of an unlimited amount of "sand," it did not take people long to ascertain that Charley possessed a very limited quantity of that very desirable commodity, and when a diminutive Mexican first insulted and then, while under the influence of mescal, assaulted Charley unpunished, he lost prestige entirely.

The Mexican disappeared not long afterward, but as it was only a case of missing greaser, it did not attract much attention.

It was now nearing the third Spring since Rustler Joe had settled in that section, and his neighbors nodded to each other, grinned and remarked that the riders of the "Spade-Bar Sleeping S" band were apt to get "contentious" when Joe and Charley started in, and that there was going to be some fun. The outfit referred to was just in from Texas, and the boys in it had a reputation for being able to "smoke" a man at the dropping of a hat. But this circumstance did not appear to phase the partners at all, for they kept on at their work of increasing the size of their corrals and making all preparations for a very busy season.

The evening after the round-up had begun, and while the young and old cattle were all well bunched, Joe and Charley started out. All nature had taken on its brightest hues.

The new grass was of the most delicate green, the cactus clumps were ablaze with blooms of yellow, orange, pink and white, the sky was faintly tinted with the roseate colors of the coming sunset, and the snowy range glinted and glistened as though crusted with diamonds, and the near hogback foothills began in blue and gradually faded into a soft gray in the distance. A few insects listlessly chirped and hummed, while from here and there came the shrill bark of a prairie dog or the dismal hoot of the companion of his burrow, the owl. But the two men paid no attention to the beauties before them. They were on a mission; they were out "to pinch" some promising mavericks or some equally promising calves, they did not care which. While the maverick was considered common property by every cattle thief in the country, the calf still belonged to the brand that owned the mother cow.

A few rods off grazed a cow with a calf at her side. The cow bore the brand of the Texas outfit. The calf had not been branded as yet, and the partners dropped a lariat over the neck of the little animal, which gave one frightened snort, a faint bellow, and then fell, half-choked by the rope around its neck.

"Tie her up," said Joe, and Charley took a few pieces of rope from his saddle pockets and tied the four feet of the calf together.

"Guess I'll take a hand in this yere jack-pot!" called out a cheery voice, and the next instant a knife had cut the ropes and the frightened calf scurried off after its mother. One of the Texas cowboys had come up unseen and had, with unequaled effrontery, intruded his presence on the cattle trust.

Charley visibly paled, Joe changed not a muscle, but there was a hardening of the lines of his face and his lower jaw protruded slightly.

"Reckon you know thet maverick belongs to us," said he. "We roped it an' claim it."

"Thet *calf* goes with its mother," said the Texan, "an' I'm yere to look after the interests of my company."

"Yer heard what I said," replied Joe menacingly, as he made a motion to pass the young man.

A slight move of the hand toward that snake-skin belt, where glistened a forty-four, then a crack from Charley's pearl-handled six-shooter, and the cowboy sprang into the

air, came down on the high heels of his riding boots, pitched back upon his shoulders—and the “Spade-Bar-Sleeping S” outfit was one man short.

Before the report had died away, before the smoke-ring from the greased barrel had broken, the little clump of cottonwoods at the left resounded with shouts and cowboy yells, horses plunged and whinneyed, and, in an instant, more than a dozen range riders came tearing over the prairie toward the two men, their sombreros flapping, their rawhide reatas and saddle laces rattling, and flourishing their “irons” in a way that caused a hard light to come into the eyes of Rustler Joe.

“Pull your freight?” shouted Charley, and in a minute, he was galloping across the sun-baked prairie straight for the foothills, with Joe close behind him, little puffs of dust jumping up near them as bullets from their pursuers dropped around and between the legs of their horses. But the trust were well-mounted, and the little bronchos of the cowboys were no match for the long-limbed, clean-cut States horses, and the distance between the two parties rapidly increased.

The foothills were quite close when Charley’s horse stuck his foot into a badger-hole, throwing his rider, the horse turning completely over and landing on the horn of the saddle, which was driven full length into the hard earth. The fine bay rolled over, made a few attempts to regain his feet and then sank back with a groan. His leg was broken. Joe by this time had ridden back and dismounted to assist his partner. A faint cheer came to his ears across the prairie from his pursuers, who were now lashing their ponies with their quirts, having seen the horse go down. Joe ground his teeth and loosed his belt from which hung his weapons, cast a look at the groaning bay, glared at the crowd of rapidly approaching cowboys from whom he neither expected nor desired mercy, and then down at the sitting form of Charley, from whose forehead trickled a tiny stream of blood.

“We’re hard put to it,” he muttered. “Guess this yere boy’s got more to live for than I hev an’ the two can’t ride one hoss. I’ll take my turn at it.”

The pursuers were quite near now, and again their pistols began to crack and tear up the earth a few yards from him. He seized Charley around the waist, lifted him high with muscular arm and dropped him into his own saddle on the

back of his beloved gray—War Eagle. Charley faintly expostulated, and for the first time Joe had a slight feeling of disgust as he looked at that drawn face, those wild eyes and quivering limbs, all bespeaking an emotion to him almost unknown—fear. The feeling was gone in an instant; and as soon as Charley had gathered up the reins, Joe brought his hand down with a resounding smack on the horse's quarter and the noble animal responded by a few bounds and then broke into a furious gallop, heading directly for a little cañon in the hills.

Charley, cursing his cowardice, in a frenzy of despair at the fate awaiting his friend, who had not a word to say even at the last against him whose coward shot had brought this trouble on, still lacked the courage, the will to turn his horse's head and go back and fight with that friend—and so he urged War Eagle on, on through the few short moments that seemed an eternity, and then turned in the saddle and looked behind. He saw Joe stagger and fall limply to the earth, two of the range riders pitch from their saddles and two bronchos rush riderless from the mass of men and horses, and then came the reports of pistols faintly to his ears. He cried aloud, he again cursed himself the day he was born; shook his clenched fist at the blue and gold arch overhead and then—then he stuck his spurs into his horse's flanks and the beautiful animal again sprang forward. He was very near the mouth of the cañon. If he could gain that he might escape into the mountains, and some day he would come back—when this affair had quieted down—when he had found his courage. He again looked back. God above! how those Texans held on. They had again taken up the chase. The gray was breathing heavily, and Charley knew that, while on the plains nothing could approach him, once in the mountains the weight of his horse would be against him, and that he would be no match for those tough little bronchos.

In between the walls of red sandstone thundered the gray, and Charley felt a chill at the short interval of time between his passage and the echoes of his pursuers as they also entered. The cañon was dark and gloomy, the dusk was rapidly coming on, and from the mountains beyond came the faint rumblings of a storm.

It was now two miles since the walls of the cañon had been entered, and every foot of the way up the bed of the dry

creek the walls on either hand seemed to grow more precipitous. The sound of the mountain storm increased, and with it came a faint swishing that caused War Eagle to throw his head in the air and snort. The sound increased. Charley looked back, and through the shadows of the cañon could see the Texas boys scrambling up the sides where it was less steep than here, while their ponies, standing in a circle with heads down and bunched, huddled closer and closer. What had caused those cowboys to leave their saddles?

Charley was in the bottom of a basin. He would ride to the upper rim and see what had alarmed his pursuers. There was a ripping, roaring, grinding, that each moment became louder, while the lightning's flash came near and nearer; trees were rent, and their splintering added to the din; huge bowlders were torn from their bases and came tearing and rumbling down.

Charley gained the upper rim of the basin. His blood froze in his veins; the gray gave a bound that unseated the rider and threw him to the earth. Charley partially arose and again looked up the cañon. Oh, heaven! it was a cloud-burst! A black wall of water, foam-crested, was even now speeding toward him. He must fly.

The walls of the cañon were so steep that it seemed impossible to gain a foothold. He sprang at them. He tore with his nails at the hard rock until his hands were lacerated and his finger-tips shredded to the bone. At last he gained! He was going up! He caught at the twisted bough of a gnarled mountain pine; he gave it his weight. The treacherous bough groaned, then snapped, Charley staggered, clutched wildly at a limb just out of reach, and pitched headlong over the twenty-foot wall he had gained, striking on his left shoulder. He lay stunned for one brief moment, then sprang to his feet, his left arm hanging limp and motionless. He glanced wildly after his horse, whom he could indistinctly see stumbling over the loose rocks of the dry water course toward the little bunch of bronchos. He looked up at the ridge of the hogback where he felt, rather than saw, his pursuers. Then he thought of Joe.

He turned toward the wall of water, his head erect and features composed, and slowly laid his hand upon his breast.

Charley had found his courage.

TOLD IN THE TRAIN*

BY GUY DE MAUPASSANT

We were all well acquainted with each other, so conversation had been general ever since leaving Cannes. As we passed Tarascon some one said "here is where the assassinations take place," and they all began to talk of the mysterious and insatiable murderer who from time to time during the past two years had taken the life of some traveller. Each person had his own theory of the matter, and his own remedy to suggest; the women gazed apprehensively at the night now rapidly falling outside, half expecting to see the face of the assassin appear at the window. And then began a series of tales, each more startling than the other, of encounters with maniacs in railway carriages or of hours spent in express trains sitting opposite some character of the most suspicious appearance. Each man had some anecdote to tell redounding to his own credit; each one had frightened, knocked down or throttled some desperado under most surprising circumstances and with commendable presence of mind.

A physician who spent every winter in the south of France finally volunteered to relate one of his own experiences.

"For my own part," said he, "I have never had an opportunity of testing my courage in an affair of that sort, but I knew a woman, one of my own patients, now dead, to whom happened one of the most singular things imaginable, and at the same time one of the most mysterious and touching.

"She was a Russian, the Countess Marie Baranow, a woman of rank and of great beauty; you know how beautiful many of the Russian women are, with their delicate features, their blue-gray eyes somewhat near together, and their slightly cold manners. They have about them something haughty and yet sweet, something tender and yet severe, which is very charming to a Frenchman. Perhaps, after all, it is the difference of race and type which makes us see so much in them.

*Translated from the French, by Mary K. Ford, for Short Stories. Copyrighted.

"Her physician had for many years seen her threatened with consumption, and had tried to persuade her to winter in the south of France, but she steadfastly refused to leave St. Petersburg; finally, last autumn, considering her life doomed, the doctor spoke to her husband, who at once insisted upon his wife going to Mentone.

"So she acquiesced, and took the train, occupying one compartment alone, with her servants in another. She sat looking a little sadly through the window at the flying landscape, feeling lonely and desolate; without children, almost without relations, with a husband whose love for her was dead, and who was sending her in this fashion to the ends of the earth just as one sends a servant to the hospital.

"At each station her servant Ivan would come to see if his mistress needed anything; he was an old retainer, blindly devoted to her and ready to carry out any orders she might give him.

"Night came on, the train was going at full speed. She could not sleep, she was too tired. Suddenly it occurred to her to count the money that her husband had brought her, in French gold, at the last minute before leaving. She opened her little bag and emptied the shining contents into her lap.

"But suddenly a whiff of fresh air struck her face; she lifted her head in surprise to see that the door had opened. Terribly startled, the Countess Marie hastily threw a shawl over the money in her lap, and at that moment a man appeared, in evening dress, bare-headed, breathing heavily and slightly wounded in one of his hands. He closed the door and sat down surveying his neighbor with glittering eyes, and then wrapped his handkerchief around his bleeding hand.

"The Countess felt herself nearly fainting with fright; this man had certainly seen her counting her money and had come intending to rob and kill her.

"He sat, out of breath, gazing fixedly at her; his face showed great emotion, and she had no doubt he was making ready to fall upon her, when he suddenly said, 'Madam, do not be frightened.'

"She made no reply, being absolutely incapable of opening her mouth, and feeling the blood surge to her head from the violent beating of her heart.

"He continued: 'I am no criminal, madam.'

"She was still silent, but in a sudden movement that she

made, her knees came together and the gold began to flow upon the carpet like water.

"The man saw this stream of money with surprise and suddenly stooped to pick it up.

"Terribly frightened, the Countess rose, letting fall the rest of her money, and sprang to the door, meaning to throw herself out; but he saw her intention, and, seizing her, forcibly seated her, and holding her by the wrists, said: 'Listen to me, madam. I am not a thief, and to prove it I am going to pick up your money and return it to you; but I am a dead man if you do not help me to pass the frontier. In an hour we shall be at the last Russian station, in an hour and twenty minutes we shall pass the limits of the empire; if you do not help me I am lost; and yet, madam, I have not stolen or killed any one or done anything dishonorable—this I swear, but I can tell you nothing more.'

"And going down on his knees he began to pick up the money, carefully collecting the pieces that had rolled under the seats; then when the little bag was once more full he handed it to his neighbor without a word, and seated himself in the furthest corner of the carriage.

"Thus they remained for some time, she motionless and silent, still faint with terror but slowly becoming somewhat reassured; he also immovable, pale as death, with his eyes looking straight before him. From time to time she glanced furtively at him. He was a man of about thirty, very handsome, and with all the appearance of a gentleman.

"The train sped on through the darkness rending the silence of the night with its shrill whistle, now slackening its pace and then going on at full speed; finally it stopped and Ivan appeared at the door for his orders.

"The Countess Marie looked once more at her strange companion and then said suddenly, though in a trembling voice, 'Ivan, you are to go back to the Count, I have no further need of you.'

"The man, perfectly amazed, stammered, 'but madam—'

"She replied, 'No, you need not come, I have changed my mind, I prefer that you should remain in Russia; here is money for your return. Give me your cap and cloak.'

"The old servant, somewhat startled, took off his cap and cloak and handed them to his mistress, obeying without reply, however, accustomed as he was to the sudden whims

and caprices of his masters; then he departed, but with tears in his eyes.

"The train started on, now approaching the frontier.

"Then the Countess Marie addressed her companion: 'These things are for you; you are now my servant Ivan; I attach but one condition to what I do for you, and that is that you never speak to me, not even to thank me whatever may happen.' The stranger bowed without speaking.

"Very soon the train stopped and officials in uniform appeared; the Countess handed them her papers, and pointing to the man at the other end of the carriage, said, 'That is my servant Ivan, and this is his passport.'

"Once more the train went on and all night long they remained sitting silently opposite each other. When morning dawned, as the train stopped at a German station, the stranger got out and standing at the door, said, 'Pardon me, madam, for breaking my promise, but I have deprived you of your servant, so it is only right that I should replace him; do you want anything?'

"She replied coldly, 'Go and find my maid!'

"He went and then disappeared.

"When she got out at some station for breakfast she saw him in the distance looking at her. Finally they arrived at Mentone."

The doctor was silent for a moment and then continued:

"One day as I was receiving my patients in my office a tall young man entered, who said:

'Doctor, I have come to ask after the Countess Marie Baranow; I am a friend of her husband's although she does not know me.'

"I replied 'there is no hope, she will never return to Russia.'

"Then this man began to sob and left the room staggering like a drunken man.

"That same evening I told the Countess that a stranger had come to me to inquire about her health. She seemed much moved and related to me the story I have just told you; she added 'This man, whom I do not know, follows me now like my shadow; I meet him every time I go out; he looks at me very intently but has never spoken to me.'

"She was silent a moment and then continued, 'I will wager that he is under my window now.'

"She left her sofa, went to the window, and, parting the curtains, showed me in fact the man, who had been to my office, seated on one of the benches on the promenade with his eyes fixed upon the hotel. He saw us and, getting up, departed without looking back.

"So there I was, witness of something both surprising and touching, the silent love of these two people who did not even know each other. He loved her with the devotion of an animal saved from death, a love grateful and faithful until death. He came every day to ask me how she was, understanding that I had guessed the state of things, and as he saw her grow more pale and feeble each day his grief was terrible to see.

"She said to me: 'I have never spoken to him but once and it seems as if I had known him for years.'

"And when they met she returned his bow with a grave yet charming smile. I feel that it made her happy in her lonely and frail condition to feel that she was loved with such constancy and respect, with such poetic feeling, with such absolute devotion. And, nevertheless, faithful to her exalted ideas, she steadfastly refused to receive him, to speak to him, even to know his name. 'No, it would spoil our curious friendship; we must remain strangers to one another.'

"As to him, he seemed to be also a species of Don Quixote for he made no attempt to come any nearer; he intended to keep until the last the absurd promise, never to speak to her, that he had made on the train.

"Often during her long hours of weakness she would rise from her sofa and part the curtains to see if he were still under her window; and when she had seen him motionless on his bench, she returned to her couch with a smile on her lips.

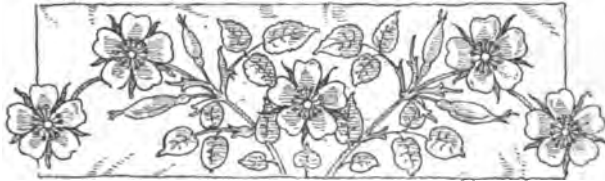
"She died one morning at about ten o'clock. As I left the house he approached me much agitated; he had already heard the news.

"'Let me see her just for one moment in your presence,' he begged. I took him by the arm and we entered the house.

"When he was at the side of the bed, where she lay, he seized her hand and pressed his lips upon it in a long and passionate kiss; then fled from the room like one demented."

The doctor was again silent for a while and then continued: "This is certainly the most curious railway adventure that has ever come to my knowledge. It must be owned that men are queer creatures."

One of the women murmured in a low voice, "Those two were not so foolish as you seem to think; they at least ——" but she could not continue for her tears. As we changed the conversation to let her recover herself we never knew what she had meant to say.



THE THRONE OF ENGLAND*

BY VIRGINIA LOVELING



on the outskirts of a small village in Belgium there stood two houses—one a large, comfortable dwelling; its neighbor a poor, mean one. In the large house the notary Soncke lived, and the other was occupied by Carl Start and his daughter. Start had a small tobacco shop on the ground floor, and in the little garden was a rabbit-hutch and hennery. At the other end of the village he hired a plot of ground on which he raised vegetables. Every day at dark Start might be seen plodding through the village street homewards, pushing slowly before him his wheelbarrow heavily laden with cabbages, carrots and turnips. He never spoke to anyone of his own accord. If a friend or acquaintance greeted him Start would mutter, deep down in his grizzled black beard, a word or two in answer.

His daughter's name was Mary. But she was called Maai-ken (the simpleton) by the villagers.

She was by this time eight and twenty. Tall and slender, with beautiful brown eyes, a fresh, bright complexion, a red mouth and teeth dazzlingly white. Her mother, a nervous creature, had died a few years before, and Maai-ken had inherited her mother's temperament. When surprised or annoyed at anything, she would tremble like an aspen-leaf, her face would flush and her lips tremble. Like her father, Maai-ken was unsociable, and had been so from her earliest childhood. If a customer came into the tobacco shop Maai-ken waited on him, civilly enough, but wasted no unnecessary words. If a man, seeing this pretty girl behind the little counter, attempted to jest with her or compliment her, Maai-ken drew herself up haughtily, while her whole figure trembled and her face flushed painfully.

*This story is a careful study of a group of odd characters in a Belgian village. Translated from the Flemish by Emma M. Phelps, and illustrated for Short Stories. Copyrighted.

She took no interest in the village gossip, and declined to enter into the amusements of the young people there.

Maaiken had indeed a very high opinion of herself, and no wonder, for well she knew what a pedigree was hers.

Schoolmaster Konkelmans had instructed her and her father on that point.

Konkelmans was a former schoolmaster who, after having taught many years in a neighboring town, had returned to



his native village, there to end his days in peace. The schoolmaster was a very learned man in the estimation of the Starts. He owned a great many thick and learned-looking volumes, and he could talk for hours without stopping. Ever since Maaiken could remember she had heard Master Konkelmans tell her father that he belonged to a former royal family

of England, and had a right to the throne of the country.

His name was certainly Stuart, and the u had been dropped out of the name through carelessness; but yet if everybody had his rights in this world, Start would now be a king and his daughter a royal princess. Instead, however, of reigning over a kingdom Carl was living in a poor little house, selling snuff and tobacco when he was not planting and digging up vegetables.

Konkelmans had told Start and Maaiken that a king, Charles Stuart by name, had reigned in England, and a queen, Mary Stuart, in Scotland. Both had been beheaded, and the last king of the Stuart family had been driven out of England by his subjects.

But Master Konkelmans would add solemnly, shaking a long, thin fore-finger as he spoke, the last scion of the Stuart family had left descendants who lived on the Continent.

Carl Start, for his own part, remembered that his grandfather had been always called the "Englishman" by his associates.

"Yes, yes," he would say to his daughter, "suppose there should be some truth in what Master Konkelmans is always saying. Well, if I am king, he shall be Prime Minister."

"And I," Maaiken would say, blushing and trembling, "may one day be a princess."

She often thought when alone in the shop what she would

do if her father were called to the throne of England. She really had no idea what a throne was, but a queen she knew was the greatest and richest lady in the land.

So Maaiken would sit and dream dreams of all she would do for her numerous brothers and sisters. How she would shower wealth and dignities upon all of them. Maaiken had a great many half-brothers and sisters, as her mother had been a widow with a large family when she married Start.

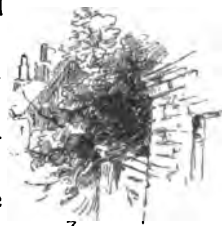
All the children of this previous marriage were widely scattered, however. The oldest daughter was a cook in a family living in Paris; another was lady's maid in a nobleman's family in Flanders. The latter came, now and then, to the village to see her step-father and sister. From the cook Maaiken got an occasional letter containing a five-franc note. Three brothers and a sister were married and living on small farms in the country.

Her father said little, but thought constantly of the position he should have occupied in the world had fate and fortune not been so adverse. When he had drunk a drop too much, which was not often, however, his tongue was loosened and he gave utterance to the thoughts which perpetually haunted him. "My name is Stuart" he would say, thumping his breast and staggering from side to side, to the great delight of the small boys following at his heels, "and I should be a King—the King of England—"

The next day, however, having slept off his intoxication, Start would appear on the street, silent and down-looking as ever, pushing his heavily-laden wheelbarrow painfully before him. Carl Start had, however, another grievance besides that of being shut out from England's throne.

The house in which he lived he had bought many years before, and for a long time it stood alone, but one day Vlieger, a rich peasant, had bought the field adjoining it and built a large house. This house faced the east and cut off all the sunlight from its humble neighbor. Only a narrow alley separated Carl's garden hedge from that of Vlieger's.

A great chestnut tree grew beside Vlieger's hedge, its branches spreading themselves over into Carl's garden, and amongst these branches their neighbor had chosen to erect a summer-house.



Start would not have hesitated to chop off the intruding branches had not an ash tree, in his garden, spread in turn its slender boughs over his neighbor's hedge. Carl loved this tree as the apple of his eye, for his son now dead had planted it.

When Vlieger died the house had stood empty a year, to the Starts' great satisfaction. After that, however, Notary Soncke had taken it.

Carl and his daughter shunned their new neighbor, and with Thekla, Vlieger's former cook, who had the unpleasant habit of throwing the waste water over the hedge, they were not on speaking terms. The groom was a cheery old fellow who persisted in spite of many rebuffs in being friendly with father and daughter, though he made little enough by friendliness.

"Good-day, neighbor," the kind old man would call over the hedge to Carl in his garden, who growled out an unintelligible word or two in answer.

"Fine weather," Djaaken would go on, "it will set your peas to sprouting."

"Fine weather it may be," was Carl's grumbling answer, "but of no use to me as long as that chestnut tree of yours keeps all the sunshine off my beds."

And Djaaken knew nothing better to do than to whistle deprecatingly in answer.

With Maaiken he fared no better.

"Tell me Djaaken," she would say in reply to all his efforts at conversation, "is Thekla going to throw the water over the hedge next winter? It freezes directly after and just as like as not my father will fall and break his arms or legs on the ice some day."

"Maaiken," Djaaken would hasten to answer, "I'll tell Thekla not to throw any more water over the hedge. It is really too bad of her."

"If my father is laid up next winter with a broken leg she will have it on her conscience. The hypocrite, who runs to church every day of her life, but does not care at all if she maims or kills her poor neighbors by her carelessness."

Maaiken sometimes went especially to Master Konkelmans to look at a picture which hung in his sitting-room. It was



a picture by an old Flemish painter, name unknown. Not a masterpiece, certainly, but yet rather a clever bit of genre painting. This portrait was of a woman, a handsome blonde, dressed in a gown of white satin and a jacket of red velvet, bordered with ermine, sitting on a carved high-backed chair before a mirror.

Though Master Konkelmans had told Maaiken that it was probably only a picture of a fine lady sitting at her dressing-table, Maaiken persisted in calling it the Princess on account of the ermine-trimmed jacket.

One day whilst playing at cards with the schoolmaster Start had held out two court-cards to Maaiken with the words, "there, a king wears a crown like this, and a queen a mantle like that." And Maaiken did not fail to notice that the royal mantle had a border of ermine.

Start, too, often dreamed of wearing a crown and royal garment, and Maaiken, who was ingenious with her needle, went to work at last to fashion for herself and her father both crown and royal robes.

The robe, to be sure, was only of merino but of the imperial purple color, and the crown, made of gilt paper, was copied closely after that of the pictured king on the court-card.

For herself she fashioned a jacket of crimson silk, and the unfortunate rabbits were ruthlessly sacrificed that their skins might serve for the trimmings and linings of ermine.

Arrayed in her royal attire, Maaiken contemplated her image in the mirror with satisfaction, and with reason, for the crimson jacket with its white facings suited her fair complexion and golden hair admirably. After that, father and daughter would often don their crowns and mantels. And while one kept the shop the other would walk up and down the room, at the back, lost in contemplation of his greatness.

One evening, however, they could not resist the tempta



tion of wearing their royal habiliments at one and the same time.

"Call me your Majesty," said Start to Maaiken.

"Certainly! and you will call me Princess in return?"

"Of course. Now, are you ready? How do you do, Majesty?"

"Quite well, Princess daughter—and if you will fetch me a mug of bitter beer I think I could drink it."

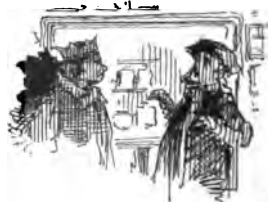
Lacking England's throne on which to seat himself, Start was obliged to content himself with a rickety wooden stool. He sat there rather unsteadily whilst Princess Maaiken filled the mug he held out to her with beer.

Just then there came a call from the shop.

Carl threw off his purple mantle hastily and ran to wait on his customer. Maaiken, who remained behind in the room, was startled to hear a burst of laughter from the shop following her father's appearance there. Hurrying after him to see what had caused it, she saw that in his hurry he had forgotten to divest himself of the gilt-paper crown. To snatch it off his head and fly back to the other room was the work of but a moment. Maaiken had forgotten, though, that she still had on the crimson jacket, but at sight of her there was no laughter, for she was an astonishingly beautiful apparition, at which the customers stared in open-eyed amazement. On their way homeward the spectators agreed that father and daughter must certainly be a little mad. On another occasion a wandering journeyman came into the shop while Maaiken was alone in attendance there, and begged her for something to eat. At sight of him a happy thought came into Maaiken's head.

"My friend," she replied, "a bit of bread and a cup of water we never deny a traveller, but if you will do me a service I will give you instead some soup and potatoes."

"What is that service?"



"I should like to know how it feels to be a queen. I desire you to kiss my hand—but with all due respect—understand me."

"With all my heart. To kiss a pretty girl's hand is both a pleasant and easy task."

Maaiken bade him follow her into the room behind the shop, drew on her crimson jacket, seated herself on a chair, and held out her hand haughtily.

The man, bowing deeply, stooped and kissed it respectfully.

"Well, are you satisfied now?" he asked her.

"So far, yes," she answered;
"but how would you like a mug of beer and a sausage in addition to the soup and potatoes?"

"I should be very glad of them; but you want me to earn them?"

"I have heard that queens are knelt to."

"They are."

"I should like you to kiss my hand again kneeling."

"I'm willing for a sausage and a glass of beer to kiss your hand kneeling."

Maaiken colored with joy when the journeyman, throwing himself on his knees, kissed her hand submissively.

After he had eaten soup, potatoes, sausage and a great piece of bread, and drained his mug of bitter beer, the journeyman, with many thanks, took his departure. In the village, however, he ran across the sexton, with whom he was acquainted, and inquired:—

"Is Maaiken Start quite right in her head, think you?"

On a Sunday afternoon in September Carl Start had gone walking with the schoolmaster, while Maaiken sat alone in the room behind the shop, dressed in her crimson jacket. Her elbows on the table, her head resting on her clasped hands, she dreamed of the throne of England. In the church she went to every Sunday, the Virgin sat upon a throne under a canopy of sky-blue calico; she wore a crown upon her head and tapers burned before the throne and flowers were strewed at the foot of it. Maaiken could imagine a queen in no



other guise. Only the day before Maaiken had seen the burgomaster's daughter married in the church. The bride wore a trailing satin gown and a veil, the bridegroom was dressed in the uniform of an officer, and Maaiken decided that should she ever become a princess she, too, would marry some one in uniform. Could it be possible that her name was really Mary Stuart and her father's Charles Stuart?

But had not the schoolmaster told her that Charles, though a king, had been beheaded, and that Mary Stuart, queen though she was, had met with the same fate? How dreadful! But, on the whole, Maaiken was no more frightened at the fate of her royal predecessors than other pretenders to thrones have been.

Just then, looking up and out of the window in front of her, Maaiken saw a fine coach driving past. That, however, was not a very unusual sight, for there were many castles and noblemen's seats in the country round about. The coachman drove slowly and seemed to be looking for somebody. The footman, too, asked a question of some girls, who looked up at him in astonishment as they answered.

Maaiken's heart throbbed with joy for she had heard the footman utter her father's name. The coach drew up in front of the tobacco shop. The footman sprang from his perch, opened the garden-gate and knocked loudly at the shop-door. Great Heavens, the throne of England! Maaiken opened the door, flushed and trembling. "Carl Start," called out the coachman from his box. He had a gold-cockade in his hat and a many-caped grey coat on. He was fat and red-faced. He drew a parcel from out of one of his great, flapping pockets.

Maaiken's lips quivered, she could not speak, she was so agitated.

"Does Carl Start live here?" inquired the footman in his turn. He used the dialect of the peasants round about. Certainly he had not long worn a nobleman's livery. His face was round and fresh as a ripe apple and he was tall and straight.

"Yes," stammered Maaiken, in answer to his question.

The spirited horses stamped and champed their bits, impatient to be off again.

"Un paquet de la part de Josephine," the coachman called out again.

Josephine? Ah, now Maaiken understood what it was that had brought the coach to her door. The coachman had brought her a parcel from her sister Fina at service in France.

"Dites lui," the coachman called to the footman, "que Josephine est très contente à Paris."

The groom began to translate the coachman's French into Flemish. But Maaiken had understood him. "I understand," she said. By this time she had recovered her composure.

"We are in the service of Baron d'Anse; this is the coachman (Maaiken could see that without his telling her) and I am the footman: my name is Heigum Angelus; my parents are peasants quite well off. I have only been a short time a servant. I left my father's house because he married again, but I shan't be a servant much longer, I——"

"Qu'est-ce-que vous chantez là?" cried the coachman growing impatient. Both men smiled kindly at her as Maaiken stood erect in the shop door.

Certainly the throne of England had not been offered her, but yet, what an honor to have a fine coach drive up to the very door. Thekla must certainly have seen it for her head was thrust out of an upper window a moment after.

"Adieu, adieu," coachman and footman cried, smiling and looking back as the coach drove off.

When they had disappeared, Maaiken thought of the parcel in her hands. She opened it and found it to contain Fina's photograph and a twenty-franc bank note. The best of it all was that Maaiken learned now, for the first time in her life, that something unexpected might happen. The next day, too, she heard to her surprise, that Djaaken had won a prize of 2,500 francs in the Brussels lottery.

Her dreams grew more easily hopeful than ever and the throne of England seemed indeed very near.

On All Soul's Day, Djaaken left the notary's, and a new servant was visible running in and out of the house and about the court yard.

The Starts took no notice of him, however, looking, as they did, upon every one living in the house next to them as an enemy.

One evening, however, Maaiken, at work in the garden, heard some one from over the notary's fence whistle to her. She took no notice until a voice called out halloa—halloa

there. Very much offended, she left what she was doing abruptly and hurried off into the house again.

The next day, however, there was a call in the shop, and Maaiken, answering it, saw a strange young man standing there.



"Don't you know me," he asked; "I have taken service next door to be near you."

"Angelus! Is it possible?"

"I called to you last evening, but you ran away from me."

"I did not know who it was; I am short-sighted."

"Father," exclaimed Maaiken to her father, who had just entered, "this is the young man who brought us the parcel from Fina."

"Oh, indeed," returned Start coldly, not so ready, evidently, as his daughter to welcome the stranger.

As time went on, however, he softened in his demeanor towards the young man, who was both kind and obliging to Carl and his daughter. Soon Start was always stumbling over Angelus in the shop, the little back parlor or the garden.

He and Maaiken seemed always to have something to say to each other. She, who had never before deigned to notice the young men of the village, would tremble and blush with pleasure at the sight of Angelus.

"Is it true what I have just heard in the village?" asked Schoolmaster Konkelmans one evening of Carl and his daughter, "that Maaken—that you—turning towards the girl—are going to marry Notary Soncke's new servant?"

"And if it should be true," she stammered, with flaming cheeks, knitting so energetically at her stocking that the needles clattered noisily one against the other.

"You marry a servant! a girl of your prospects!" exclaimed the schoolmaster, shrugging his shoulders.

"What prospects have I?" she answered, calmly.

"There is no knowing what fate may have in store for you."

"I have waited in vain for ten long years for fate to bring me rank and fortune—I am tired of waiting."

"Silence!" commanded her father, sternly, annoyed at his daughter for losing faith in their future. But it was easy for

Maaiken to see that he, too, had given up all hope by this time.

"Well, what do you think of your daughter's choice of a husband?" inquired the schoolmaster.

"I say he is not a suitable match for a Princess of England."

"But I am not a Princess of England—I am not a princess at all. My name is Start and not Stuart," said Maaiken, resolutely, and Angelus, coming the next day to get Start's consent to marry Maaiken, Carl gave it and not too ungraciously, either.

As if to make him some amends for his disappointment about his daughter's marriage, the notary now offered to buy Start's little property. It was a good offer, and Carl was only too glad to accept it.

The tree, however, which his son had planted, he carefully dug up and carried away with him.

Angelus and Maaiken were married in the home before it was given up to its new owner. They went off for a day's journey to Ostend. It was Maaiken's wish to go there, as she had never in her life seen the sea. Carl, the schoolmaster, and his wife went with the young couple on the journey. The month of February was a bad time of year to go there, but these simple folk knew nothing about that.



After dinner the wedding party went out upon the long, deserted pier, and gazed out curiously over the dark, restless waves of the sea.

Carl was a little in advance of the others. The wine he had just drunk had gone to his head somewhat. Turning round and facing them he struck his breast proudly, exclaiming:

"In me you may behold the rightful heir to the throne of England."

"What is he saying?" inquired Angelus of his wife, astonished.

"It is nonsense—sheer nonsense," she returned, her face crimson with mortification. "He does not know himself what he is saying."

Angelus, a week after his marriage, bought a little inn at Brueckhaeuschen.

Maaiken's father came there to live with them. Little Landus's tree was planted on the green and lived and flourished.

"What shall we call our house?" asked Angelus at the dinner he gave to the Konkelmans, shortly after taking possession of his property.

"At the Ferry," suggested his father-in-law. This name, however, found favor with no one.

"Prospect Inn," lisped out the schoolmaster's wife, a lady fond of novel reading. "There is no prospect at all except of the sand-hills," scoffed her husband.

"The Three Quails," Angelus spoke hesitatingly; he feared his wife would not like the name. Nor did she.

Just then Master Konkelmans arose solemnly from his seat of honor at the head of the table.

"I have it," he exclaimed, nodding and smiling at Start and Maaiken. The inn shall be called "The Throne of England."



MY STOWAWAY.*

BY ROBERT BARR. (LUKE SHARP)

Ye can play yer jokes on Nature,
An' play 'em slick;
She'll grin a grin, but, land sakes, friend,
Look out fer the kick.

One night about eleven o'clock I stood at the stern of that fine Atlantic steamship, the *City of Venice*, which was plowing its way through the darkness toward America. I leaned on the rounded bulwark and enjoyed a smoke, as I gazed on the luminous trail the wheel was making in the quiet sea. Some one touched me on the shoulder, saying, "Beg pardon, sir"; and, on straightening up, I saw in the dim light a man whom at first I took to be one of the steerage passengers. I thought he wanted to get past me, for the room was rather restricted in the passage between the aft wheel-house and the stern, and I moved aside. The man looked hurriedly to one side and then the other, and, approaching, said in a whisper, "I'm starving, sir!"

"Why don't you go and get something to eat, then? Don't they give you plenty forward?"

"I suppose they do, sir; but I'm a stowaway. I got on at Liverpool. What little I took with me is gone, and for two days I've had nothing."

"Come with me. I'll take you to the steward, he'll fix you all right."

"Oh, no, no, no," he cried, trembling with excitement.

"If you speak to any of the officers or crew I'm lost. I assure you, sir, I'm an honest man; I am, indeed, sir. It's the old story—nothing but starvation at home, so my only chance seemed to be to get this way to America. If I'm caught I shall get dreadful usage and will be taken back and put in jail."

"Oh, you're mistaken. The officers are all courteous gentlemen."

"Yes, to you cabin passengers they are. But to a stowaway—that's a different matter. If you can't help me, sir, please don't inform on me."

"How can I help you but by speaking to the captain or purser?"

* A humorous tale from "In a Steamer Chair." Cassell Pub. Co.

"Get me a morsel to eat."

"Where were you hid?"

"Right here, sir, in this place," and he put his hand on the square deck edifice beside us. This seemed to be a spare wheelhouse, used if anything went wrong with the one in front. It had a door on each side, and there were windows all round it. At present it was piled full of cane, folding steamer-chairs and other odds and ends.

"I crawl in between the chairs and the wall and get under that piece of tarpaulin."

"Well, you're sure of being caught, for the first fine day all these chairs will be taken out and the deck steward can't miss you."

The man sighed as I said this and admitted the chances were much against him. Then, starting up, he cried, "Poverty is the great crime. If I had stolen someone else's money I would have been able to take cabin passage instead of——"

"If you weren't caught."

"Well, if I were caught, what then? I would be well fed and taken care of."

"Oh, they'd take *care* of you."

"The waste food in this great ship would feed a hundred hungry wretches like me! Does my presence keep the steamer back a moment of time? No. Well, who is harmed by my trying to better myself in a new world? No one. I am begging for a crust from the lavish plenty, all because I am struggling to be honest. It is only when I become a thief that I am out of danger of starvation—caught or free."

"There, there; now, don't speak so loud or you'll have someone here. You hang round and I'll bring you some provender. What would you like to have? Poached eggs on toast, roast turkey, or——"

The wretch sank down at my feet as I said this, and recognizing the cruelty of it, I hurried down into the saloon and hunted up a steward who had not yet turned in.

"Steward," I said, "Can you get me a few sandwiches or anything to eat at this late hour?"

"Yessir, certainly, sir; beef or 'am, sir?"

"Both, and a cup of coffee, please."

"Well, sir, I'm afraid there's no coffee, sir; but I could make you a pot of tea in a moment, sir."

"All right, and bring them to my room, please?"

"Yessir."

In a very short time there was that faint steward rap at the stateroom door, and a most appetizing tray-load was respectfully placed at my service.

When the waiter had gone I hurried up the companion way with much the air of a man who is stealing fowls, and I found my stowaway just in the position I had left him.

"Now, pitch in," I said. "I'll stand guard forward here, and, if you hear me cough, strike for cover. I'll explain the tray matter if it's found."

He simply said "Thank you, sir," and I went forward. When I came back the tray had been swept clean and the teapot emptied. My stowaway was making for his den when I said, "How about to-morrow?"

He answered, "This'll do me for a couple of days."

"Nonsense. I'll have a square meal for you here in the corner of this wheelhouse, so that you can get at it without trouble. I'll leave it about this time to-morrow night."

"You won't tell anyone, anyone at all, sir?"

"No. At least, I'll think over the matter, and if I see a way out I'll let you know."

"God bless you, sir."

I turned the incident over in my mind a good deal that night, and I almost made a resolution to take Cupples into my confidence. Roger Cupples, a lawyer of San Francisco, sat next me at table, and with the freedom of wild Westerners we were already well acquainted, although only a few days out. Then I thought of putting a supposititious case to the captain—he was a thorough gentleman—and if he spoke generously about the supposititious case I would spring the real one on him. The stowaway had impressed me by his language as being a man worth doing something for.

Next day I was glad to see that it was rainy. There would be no demand for ship chairs that day. I felt that real sunshiny weather would certainly unearth, or unchain, my stowaway. I met Cupples on deck, and we walked a few rounds together.

At last Cupples, who had been telling me some stories of court trial in San Francisco, said, "Let's sit down and wrap up. This deck's too wet to walk on."

"All the seats are damp," I said.

"I'll get out my steamer-chair. Steward," he cried to the

deck steward, who was shoving a mop back and forth, "get me my chair. There's a tag on it, 'Berth 96.'"

"No, no," I cried hastily, "let's go into the cabin. It's raining."

"Only a drizzle. Won't hurt you at sea, you know."

By this time the deck steward was hauling down chairs trying to find No. 96, which I felt sure would be near the bottom. I could not control my anxiety as the steward got nearer and nearer the tarpaulin. At last I cried:

"Steward, never mind that chair; take the first two that come handy."

Cupples looked astonished, and, as we sat down, I said:

"I have something to tell you, and I trust you will say nothing about it to anyone else. There's a man under those chairs."

The look that came into the lawyer's face showed that he thought me demented; but, when I told him the whole story, the judicial expression came on, and he said, shaking his head!

"That's bad business."

"I know it."

"Yes, but it's worse than you have any idea of. I presume that you don't know what section 4738 of the Revised Statutes says?"

"No; I don't."

"Well, it is to the effect that any person or persons, who willfully or with malice aforethought or otherwise, shall aid, abet, succor, or cherish, either directly or indirectly, or by implication, any person who feloniously or secretly conceals himself on any vessel, barge, brig, schooner, bark, clipper, steamship or other craft touching at or coming within the jurisdiction of these United States, the said person's purpose being the defrauding of the revenue of, or the escaping any or all of the just legal dues exacted by such vessel, barge, etc., the person so aiding or abetting, shall in the eye of the law be considered as accomplice before, during and after the illegal act, and shall in such case be subject to the penalties accruing thereunto, to wit—a fine of not more than five thousand dollars, or imprisonment of not more than two years—or both, at the option of the judge before whom the party so accused is convicted."

"Great Heavens! is that really so?"

"Well, it isn't word for word, but that is the purport. Of

course, if I had my books here, I—why, you've doubtless heard of the case of the Pacific Steamship Company *versus* Cumberland. I was retained on behalf of the company. Now, all Cumberland did was to allow the man—he was sent up for two years—to carry his valise on board, but we proved the intent. Like a fool, he boasted of it, but the steamer brought back the man, and Cumberland got off with four thousand dollars and costs. Never got out of that scrape less than ten thousand dollars. Then, again, the steamship Peruvian *versus* McNish; that is even more to the——”

“See here, Cupples. Come with me to-night and see the man. If you heard him talk you would see the inhumanity——”

“Tush. I'm not fool enough to mix up in such a matter; and look here, you'll have to work it pretty slick if you get yourself out. The man will be caught as sure as fate; then knowingly, or through fright, he'll incriminate you.”

“What would you do if you were in my place?”

“My dear sir, don't put it that way. It's a reflection on both my judgment and my legal knowledge. I *couldn't* be in such a scrape. But, as a lawyer—minus the fee—I'll tell you what *you* should do. You should give the man up before witnesses—before *witnesses*. I'll be one of them myself. Get as many of the cabin passengers as you like out here to-day, and let the officers search. If he charges you with what the law terms support, deny it, and call attention to the fact that you have given information. By the way, I would give written information and keep a copy.”

“I gave the man my word not to inform on him, and so I can't do it to-day, but I'll tell him of it to-night.”

“And have him commit suicide, or give himself up first and incriminate you? Nonsense. Just release yourself from your promise. That's all. He'll trust you.”

“Yes, poor wretch, I'm afraid he will.”

About ten o'clock that night I resolved to make another appeal to Roger Cupples to, at least, stand off and hear the man talk. Cupples' stateroom, No. 96, was in the forward part of the steamer, down a long passage and off a short side passage. Mine was aft the cabin. The door of 96 was partly open, and inside an astonishing sight met my gaze.

There stood my stowaway.

He was evidently admiring himself in the glass, and with

a brush was touching up his face with dark paint here and there. When he put on a woe-begone look he was the stow-away; when he chuckled to himself he was Roger Cupples, Esq.

The moment the thing dawned on me I quietly withdrew and went up the forward companion way. Soon Cupples came cautiously up, and, seeing the way clear, scudded along in the darkness and hid in the aft wheelhouse. I saw the whole thing now. It was a scheme to get me to make a fool of myself, some fine day, before the rest of the passengers and have a standing joke on me. I walked forward. The first officer was on duty.

"I have reason to believe," I said, "that there is a stow-away in the aft wheelhouse."

Quicker than it takes me to tell it a detachment of sailors were sent aft under the guidance of the third mate. I went through the saloon and smoking room, and said to the gentlemen who were playing cards and reading:

"There's a row upstairs of some kind."

We were all on deck before the crew had surrounded the wheelhouse. There was a rattle of folded steamer-chairs, a pounce by the third mate, and out came the unfortunate Cupples, dragged by the collar.

"Hold on; let go. This is a mistake."

"You can't both hold on and let go," said Stalker, of Indiana.

"Come out o' this," cried the mate, jerking him forward.

With a wrench the stowaway tore himself free and made a dash for the companionway. A couple of sailors instantly tripped him up.

"Let go of me; I'm a cabin passenger," cried Cupples.

"Bless me!" I cried in astonishment. "This isn't you, Cupples? Why, I acted on your own advice and that of Revised Statutes, No. whatever-they-were."

"Well, act on my advice again," cried the infuriated Cupples, "and go to—the hold."

However, he was in better humor the next day, and stood treat all round. We found, subsequently, that Cupples was a New York actor, and at the entertainment given for the benefit of the sailors' orphans a few nights after, he recited a piece in costume that just melted the ladies. It was voted a wonderfully touching performance, and he called it "The Stowaway."

THE KING'S STRATAGEM*

BY STANLEY G. WEYMAN.

In the days when Henry the Fourth of France was King of Navarre only, and in that little kingdom of hills and woods which occupies the southwest corner of the larger country, was with difficulty supporting the Huguenot cause against the French court and the Catholic League; in the days when every isolated castle, from the Garonne to the Pyrenees, was a bone of contention between the young king and the crafty queen-mother, Catherine de Medicis, a conference between these notable personages took place in the picturesque town of La Réole.

La Réole still rises grey, time-worn, and half-ruined, on a lofty cliff above the broad green waters of the Garonne, forty odd miles from Bordeaux. But it is a small place now. In the days of which we are speaking, however, it was important, strongly fortified, and guarded by a castle which looked down on a thousand red-tiled roofs, rising in terraces from the river. As the meeting-place of the two sovereigns it was for the time as gay as Paris itself, Catherine having brought with her a bevy of fair maids of honor, in the effect of whose charms she, perhaps, put as much trust as in her own diplomacy. But the peaceful appearance of the town was delusive, for even while every other house in it rang with music and silvery laughter, each party was ready to fly to arms without warning, if it saw that any advantage was to be gained thereby.

On an evening shortly before the end of the conference two men sat at play in a room, the deep-embrasured window of which looked down from a considerable height upon the river. The hour was late and the town silent. Outside, the moonlight fell bright and pure on sleeping fields and long, straight lines of poplars. Within the room a silver lamp, suspended from the ceiling, threw light upon the table, leaving the farther parts of the room in shadow. The walls were

*A romance of history from the Strand Magazine. Illustrations, after Paul Hardy, by H. M. Wolcott for Short Stories.

hung with faded tapestry. On the low bedstead in one corner lay a handsome cloak, a sword, and one of the clumsy pistols of the period. Across a chair lay another cloak and sword, and on the window seat, beside a pair of saddle-bags, were strewn half a dozen such trifles as soldiers carried from camp to camp—a silver comfit-box, a jeweled dagger, a mask and velvet cap.

The faces of the players, as they bent over the dice, were in shadow. One—a slight, dark man of middle height, with a weak chin, and a mouth as weak, but shaded by a dark moustache—seemed, from the occasional oaths which he let



drop, to be losing heavily. Yet his opponent, a stouter and darker man, with a sword-cut across his left temple, and that swaggering air which has at all times marked the professional soldier, showed no signs of triumph or elation. On the contrary, though he kept silence, or spoke only a formal word or two, there was a gleam of anxiety and suppressed excitement in his eyes, and more than once he looked keenly at his companion, as if to judge of his feelings or learn whether the time had come for some experiment which he meditated. But for this, an observer looking in through the window would have taken the two for only one more instance of the hawk and pigeon.

At last the young player threw down the caster, with a groan.

"You have the luck of the evil one," he said, bitterly. "How much is that?"

"Two thousand crowns," replied the other without emotion. "You will play no more?"

"No! I wish to heaven I had never played at all!" was the answer. As he spoke the loser rose, and going to the window stood looking moodily out. For a few moments the elder man remained seated, gazing at him furtively, but at length he, too, rose, and, stepping softly to his companion touched him on the shoulder. "Your pardon a moment, M. le Vicomte," he said. "Am I right in concluding that the loss of this sum will inconvenience you?"

"A thousand fiends!" exclaimed the young Vicomte, turning on him wrathfully. "Is there any man whom the loss of two thousand crowns would not inconvenience. As for me——"

"For you," continued the other, smoothly filling up the pause, "shall I be wrong in saying that it means something like ruin?"

"Well, sir, and if it does?" the young man retorted, drawing himself up haughtily, his cheek a shade paler with passion. "Depend upon it, you shall be paid. Do not be afraid of that!"

"Gently, gently, my friend," the winner answered, his patience in strong contrast with the other's violence. "I had no intention of insulting you, believe me. Those who play with the Vicomte de Lanthénon are not wont to doubt his honor. I spoke only in your own interest. It has occurred to me, Vicomte, that the matter might be arranged at less cost to yourself."

"How?" was the curt question.

"May I speak freely?" The Vicomte shrugged his shoulders, and the other, taking silence for consent, proceeded: "You, Vicomte, are governor of Lusigny for the King of Navarre; I of Créance, for the King of France. Our towns lie only three leagues apart. Could I by any chance, say on one of these fine nights, become master of Lusigny, it would be worth more than two thousand crowns to me. Do you understand?"

"No," the young man answered slowly, "I do not."

"Think over what I have said, then," was the brief answer.

For a full minute there was silence in the room. The Vicomte gazed out of the window with knitted brows and compressed lips, while his companion, sitting down, leant back in his chair, with an air of affected carelessness. Outside, the rattle of arms and hum of voices told that the watch were passing through the street. The church bell struck one. Suddenly the Vicomte burst into a hoarse laugh, and, turn-

ing, snatched up his cloak and sword.

"The trap was very well laid, M. le Capitaine," he said almost jovially; "but I am still sober enough to take care of myself—and of Lusigny. I wish you good-night. You shall have your money, never fear."

"Still, I am afraid it will cost you dearly," the Captain answered, as he rose and moved toward the door to open it for



his guest. His hand was already on the latch when he paused. "Look here," he said, "what do you say to this, then? I will stake the two thousand crowns you have lost to me, and another thousand besides, against your town. Fool! no one can hear us. If you win you go off a free man with my thousand. If you lose, you put me in possession one of these fine nights. What do you say to that? A single throw to decide."

The young man's pale face reddened. He turned, and his eyes sought the table and the dice irresolutely. The temptation, indeed, came at an unfortunate moment, when the excitement of play had given way to depression, and he saw nothing before him outside the door, on which his hand was laid, but the cold reality of ruin. The temptation to return, and by a single throw set himself right with the world, was too

much for him. Slowly he came back to the table. "Confound you!" he said irritably. "I think you are the devil himself, Captain!"

"Don't talk child's talk!" said the other coldly, drawing back as his victim advanced. "If you do not like the offer you need not take it."

But the young man's fingers had already closed on the dice. Picking them up he dropped them once, twice, thrice on the table, his eyes gleaming with the play-fever. "If I win?" he said doubtfully.

"You carry away a thousand crowns," answered the Captain, quietly. "If you lose you contrive to leave one of the gates of Lusigny open for me before next full moon. That is all."

"And what if I lose, and not pay the forfeit?" asked the Vicomte, laughing weakly.

"I trust to your honor," said the Captain. And, strange as it may seem, he knew his man. The young noble of the day might betray his cause and his trust, but the debt of honor incurred at play was binding on him.

"Well," said the Vicomte, "I agree. Who is to throw first?"

"As you will," replied the Captain, masking under an appearance of indifference a real excitement which darkened his cheek, and caused the pulse in the old wound on his face to beat furiously.

"Then do you go first," said the Vicomte.

"With your permission," assented the Captain. And taking the dice up in the caster he shook them with a practised hand, and dropped them on the board. The throw was seven.

The Vicomte took up the caster and, as he tossed the dice into it, glanced at the window. The moonlight shining athwart it fell in silvery sheen on a few feet of the floor. With the light something of the silence and coolness of the night entered also and appealed to him. For a few seconds he hesitated. He even made as if he would have replaced the box on the table. But the good instinct failed. It was too late, and with a muttered word, which his dry lips refused to articulate, he threw the dice. Seven!

Neither of the men spoke, but the Captain rattled the little cubes, and again flung them on the table, this time with a

slight air of bravado. They rolled one over the other and lay still. Seven again!

The young Vicomte's brow was damp, and his face pale and drawn. He forced a quavering laugh, and with an unsteady hand took his turn. The dice fell far apart, and lay where they fell. Six!

The winner nodded gravely. "The luck is still with me," he said, keeping his eyes on the table that the light of triumph which had suddenly leapt into them might not be seen. "When do you go back to your command, Vicomte?"

The unhappy man stood like one stunned, gazing at the two little cubes which had cost him so dearly. "The day after to-morrow," he muttered hoarsely striving to collect himself.

"Then shall we say the following evening?" asked the Captain,

"Very well."

"We quite understand one another," continued the winner, eyeing his man watchfully, and speaking with more urgency. "I may depend on you, M. le Vicomte, I presume."

"The Lanthenons have never been wanting to their word," the young nobleman answered, stung into sudden haughtiness. "If I live I will put Lusigny into your hands, M. le Capitaine. Afterwards I will do my best to recover it—in another way."

"I shall be entirely at your disposal," replied the Captain, bowing lightly. And in a moment he was alone—alone with his triumph, his ambition, his hopes for the future—alone with the greatness to which his capture of Lusigny was to be the first step, and which he should enjoy not a whit the less because as yet fortune had dealt out to him more blows than caresses, and he was still at forty, after a score of years of

roughest service, the governor of a paltry country town.

Meanwhile, in the darkness of the narrow streets, the Vicomte was making his way to his lodgings in a state of despair and unhappiness most difficult to describe. Chilled,



sobered, and affrighted he looked back and saw how he had thrown for all and lost all, how he had saved the dregs of his fortune at the expense of his loyalty, how he had seen a way of escape and lost it for ever! No wonder that, as he trudged alone through the mud and darkness of the sleeping town, his breath came quickly and his chest heaved, and he looked from side to side as a hunted animal might, uttering great sighs. Ah, if he could only have retraced the last three hours!

Worn out and exhausted, he entered his lodging, and securing the door behind him stumbled up the stone stairs and entered his room. The impulse to confide his misfortunes to some one was so strong upon him that he was glad to see a dark form half sitting, half lying in a chair before the dying embers of a wood fire. In those days a man's natural confidant was his valet; the follower, half-friend, half-servant, who had been born on his estate, who lay on a pallet at the foot of his bed, who carried his *billets-doux* and held his cloak at the duello, who rode near his stirrup in fight and nursed him in illness, who not seldom advised him in the choice of a wife, and lied in support of his suit.

The young Vicomte flung his cloak over a chair. "Get up, you rascal!" he cried, impatiently. "You pig, you dog!" he continued, with increasing anger. "Sleeping there as though your master were not ruined by that scoundrel of a Breton! Bah!" he added, gazing bitterly at his follower, "you are of the *canaille*, and have neither honor to lose nor a town to betray!"

The sleeping man moved in his chair and half turned. The Vicomte, his patience exhausted, snatched the bonnet from his head, and threw it on the ground. "Will you listen?" he said. "Or go, if you choose, look for another master. I am ruined! Do you hear? Ruined, Gil! I have lost all—money, land, Lusigny itself, at the dice!"

The man, aroused at last, stooped with a lazy movement, and picking up his hat dusted it with his hand, and rose with a yawn to his feet.

"I am afraid, Vicomte," he said, his tones, quiet as they were, sounding like thunder in the Vicomte's astonished and bewildered ears, "I am afraid that if you have lost Lusigny, you have lost something which was not yours to lose!"

As he spoke he struck the embers with his foot, and the

fire, blazing up, shone on his face. The Vicomte saw, with unutterable confusion and dismay, that the man before him was not Gil at all, but the last person in the world to whom he should have betrayed himself. The astute, smiling eyes, the aquiline nose, the high forehead, and projecting chin, which the short beard and moustache scarcely concealed, were only too well known to him. He stepped back with a cry of horror. "Sire!" he said, and then his tongue failed him. He stood silent, pale, convicted, his chin on his breast. The man to whom he had confessed his treachery was the master whom he had conspired to betray.



"I had suspected something of this," Henry of Navarre continued, after a pause, a tinge of irony in his tone. "Rosny told me that that old fox, the Captain of Créance, was affecting your company a good deal, M. le Vicomte, and I find that, as usual, his suspicions were well founded. What with a gentleman, who shall be nameless, who has bartered a ford and a castle for the favor of Mademoiselle de Luynes,

and yourself, I am blest with some faithful followers! For shame!" he continued, seating himself with dignity. "Have you nothing to say for yourself?"

The young noble stood with his head bowed, his face white. This was ruin, indeed, absolutely irremediable. "Sire," he said at last, "your Majesty has a right to my life, not to my honor."

"Your honor!" quoth Henry, biting contempt in his tone.

The young man started, and for a second his cheek flamed under the well-deserved reproach; but he recovered himself. "My debt to your Majesty," he said, "I am willing to pay."

"Since pay you must," Henry muttered softly.

"But I claim to pay also my debt to the Captain of Créance."

"Oh," the King answered. "So you would have me take your worthless life, and give up Lusigny?"

"I am in your hands, sire."

"Pish, sir!" Henry replied in angry astonishment. "You talk like a child. Such an offer, M. de Lanthenon, is folly, and you know it. Now listen to me. It was lucky for you that I came in to-night, intending to question you. Your madness is known to me only, and I am willing to overlook it. Do you hear? Cheer up, therefore, and be a man. You are young; I forgive you. This shall be between you and me only," the young prince continued, his eyessoftening as the other's head drooped, "and you need think no more of it until the day when I shall say to you, 'Now, M. de Lanthenon, for France and for Henry, strike!'"



He rose as the last word passed his lips, and held out his hand. The Vicomte fell on one knee, and kissed it reverently, then sprang to his feet again. "Sire," he said, stand-

ing erect, his eyes shining, "you have punished me heavily, more heavily than was needful. There is only one way in which I can show my gratitude, and that is by ridding you of a servant who can never again look your enemies in the face."

"What new folly is this?" said Henry, sternly. "Do you not understand that I have forgiven you?"

"Therefore I cannot give up Lusigny and I must acquit myself of my debt to the Captain of Créance in the only way which remains," replied the young man, firmly. "Death is not so hard that I would not meet it twice over rather than again betray my trust."

"This is midsummer madness!" said the King, hotly.

"Possibly," replied the Vicomte, without emotion; "yet of a kind to which your Majesty is not altogether a stranger."

The words appealed strongly to that love of the chivalrous which formed part of the King's nature, and was one cause alike of his weakness and his strength, which in its more extravagant flights gave opportunity after opportunity to his enemies, in its nobler and saner expressions won victories which all his astuteness and diplomacy could not have compassed. He stood looking with half-hidden admiration at the man whom two minutes before he had despised.

"I think you are in jest," he said, presently.

"No, sire," the young man answered, gravely; "in my country they have a proverb about us. 'The Lanthenons,' say they, 'have ever been bad players but good payers.' I will not be the first to be worse than my name!"

He spoke with so quiet a determination that the King was staggered, and for a minute or two paced the room in silence, inwardly reviling the generous obstinacy of his weak-kneed supporter, yet unable to withhold his admiration from it. At length he stopped, with a low, abrupt exclamation.

"Wait!" he cried. "I have it! *Ventre Saint Gris*, man, I have it!" His eyes sparkled, and, with a gentle laugh, he hit the table a sounding blow. "Ha! ha! I have it!" he repeated, joyously.

The young noble gazed at him in surprise, half sullen, half incredulous. But when Henry in low, rapid tones had expounded his plan, the Vicomte's face underwent a change. Hope and life sprang into it. The blood flew to his cheeks. His whole aspect softened. In a moment he was on his knee, mumbling the

King's hand, his eyes full of joy and gratitude. After that the two talked long, the murmur of their voices broken more than once by the ripple of low laughter. When they at length separated, and Henry, his face hidden by the folds of his cloak, had stolen away to his lodgings, where, no doubt, more than one watcher was awaiting him with a mind full of anxious fears, the Vicomte threw open his window and looked out on the night. The moon had set, but the stars still shone peacefully in the dark canopy above. He remembered on a sudden, his throat choking with silent repressed emotion, that he was looking towards his home—the stiff grey pile among the beech woods of Navarre which had been in his family since the days of St. Louis, and which he had so lightly risked. And he registered a vow in his heart that of all Henry's servants he would henceforth be the most faithful.

Meanwhile the Captain of Créance was enjoying the sweets of coming triumph. He did not look out into the night, it is true, but pacing up and down the room he planned and calculated, considering how he might make the most of his success. He was still comparatively young. He had years of strength before him. He would rise. He would not easily be satisfied. The times were troubled, opportunities many, fools many; bold men with brains and hands few.



At the same time he knew that he could be sure of nothing until Lusigny was actually his, and he spent the next few days in considerable suspense. But no hitch occurred. The Vicomte made the necessary communications to him; and men in his own pay informed him of dispositions, ordered by the governor of Lusigny, which left him in no doubt that the loser intended to pay his debt.

It was, therefore, with a heart already gay with anticipa

tion that the Captain rode out of Créance two hours before midnight on an evening eight days later. The night was dark, but he knew the road well. He had with him a powerful force, composed in part of thirty of his own garrison, bold, hardy fellows, and in part of six score horsemen, lent him by the governor of Montauban. As the Vicomte had undertaken to withdraw, under some pretence or other, one-half of his command, and to have one of the gates opened by a trusty hand, the Captain trotted along in excellent spirits, and stopped to scan with approval the dark line of his troopers as they plodded past him, the jingle of their swords and corselets ringing sweet music in his ears. He looked for an easy victory; but it was not any slight misadventure that would rob him of his prey. As his company wound on by the river-side, their accoutrements reflected in the stream or passed into the black shadow of the olive grove which stands a mile to the east of Lusigny, he felt little doubt of the success of his enterprise.

Treachery apart, that is; and of treachery there was no sign. The troopers had scarcely halted under the last clump of trees before a figure detached itself from one of the largest trunks, and advanced to their leader's rein. The Captain saw with surprise that it was the Vicomte himself. For a second he thought something had gone wrong, but the young noble's first words reassured him. "It is all right," M. de Lanthenon whispered, as the Captain bent down to him. "I have kept my word, and I think that there will be no resistance. The planks for crossing the moat lie opposite the gate. Knock thrice at the latter, and it will be opened. There are not fifty armed men in the place."

"Good!" the Captain answered, in the same cautious tone. "But you—"

"I am believed to be elsewhere, and must be gone. I have far to ride to-night. Farewell."

"Till we meet again," the Captain answered; and with that his ally glided away and was lost in the darkness. A cautious word set the troop again in motion, and a very few minutes saw them standing on the edge of the moat, the outline of the gateway tower looming above them, a shade darker than the wrack of clouds which overhead raced silently across the sky. A moment of suspense, while one and another shivered—for there is that in a night attack

which touches the nerves of the stoutest—and the planks were found, and as quietly as possible laid across the moat. This was so successfully done that it evoked no challenge, and the Captain, crossing quickly with some picked men, stood almost in the twinkling of an eye under the shadow of the gateway. Still no sound was heard save the hurried breathing of those at his elbow or the stealthy tread of others crossing. Cautiously he knocked three times and waited. The third rap had scarcely sounded, however, before the gate rolled silently open, and he sprang in, followed by his men.

So far so good. A glance at the empty street and the porter's pale face told him at once that the Vicomte had kept his word. But he was too old a soldier to take anything for granted, and forming up his men as quickly as they entered, he allowed no one to advance until all were inside, and then, his trumpet sounding a wild note of defiance, his force sprang forward in two compact bodies, and in a moment the town awoke to find itself in the hands of the enemy.

As the Vicomte had promised, there was no resistance. In the small keep a score of men did indeed run to arms, but only to lay them down without striking a blow when they became aware of the force opposed to them. Their leader, sullenly acquiescing, gave up his sword and the keys of the town to the victorious Captain, who, as he sat his horse in the middle of the market-place, giving his orders and sending off riders with the news, already saw himself in fancy Governor of a province and Knight of the Holy Ghost.

As the red light of the torches fell on steel caps and polished hauberks, on the serried ranks of pikemen, and the circle of white-faced townsmen, the picturesque old square looked doubly picturesque. Every five minutes, with a clatter of iron on the rough pavement and a shower of sparks, a horseman sprang away to tell the news at Montauban or Cahors; and every time that this occurred, the Captain, astride on his charger, felt a new sense of power and triumph.

Suddenly the low murmur of voices was broken by a new sound, the hurried clang of hoofs, not departing but arriving. There was something in the noise which made the Captain prick his ears, and secured for the messenger a speedy passage through the crowd. Even at the last the man did not spare his horse, but spurring to the Captain's side, then and then only sprang to the ground. His face was

pale, his eyes were bloodshot. His right arm was bound up in blood-stained cloths. With an oath of amazement, the Captain recognized the officer whom he had left in charge of Créance, and thundered out, "What is it?"

"They have got Créance!" the man gasped, reeling as he spoke. "They have got Créance!"

"Who?" the Captain shrieked, his face purple with rage.

"The Little Man of Béarn! He assaulted it five hundred strong an hour after you left, and had the gate down before we could fire a dozen shots. We did what we could, but we



were but one to seven. I swear, Captain, we did all we could. Look at this!"

Almost black in the face, the Captain swore another frightful oath. It was not only that he saw governorship and honors vanish like will-o-the-wisps, but that he saw even more quickly that he had made himself the laughing stock of a kingdom! And he had. To this day among the stories which the southern French love to tell of the prowess and astuteness of the great Henry, there is none more frequently told, or more frequently laughed over, than that of the famous exchange of Créance for Lusigny.

THE DEATH OF A DESERTER*

BY V. STUART MOSBY.

A dull gray sky hanging over the grayer hills along whose wooded, purple tops, a sullen glow seems to burn like a narrow band of fire—down in the wrinkled meadows the rustling corn standing in tented wigwams. Along the muddy road rides a negro on a mule, swinging his bare feet and nodding to the dreary monotone of his weird chant; then up the lane comes the low "cling, cluck; cling, cluck" of bells, as the cows stroll lazily homeward through the leaf-strewn pathway.

Cold and lifeless seem the watery fields. Even the smoke from the mud-thatched cabins struggles in a feeble protest as the playful wind blows it in gray, misty wraiths against the leaden sky.

Suddenly the low, heavy tread of marching feet falls on the listening air, and out from the flame-tinted forest comes a line of faded blue, shoulder to shoulder. The flash of the bayonets seems a long sword of quivering light, cutting across the dull golden-brown of the underbrush. Clenched hands on the rifle barrels, mud on the worn uniforms, and grim faces set with the stern lines of unflinching duty.

Up the rocky hill; then at the command the line divides and a narrow lane shows between two human walls. Slowly before the downcast eyes passes a wagon in which lies a long pine coffin and on its lid sits—the deserter.

Calmly, with folded arms, he sways his body to the jolting motion, yet loud above the jingling harness and splashing hoofs tremble the quivering notes of a plaintive hymn. He must die and earth is forgotten. Death has touched the hidden spring, rolling away the canvas of the present, till his tear-dimmed eye can see the old familiar scenes—the fireside in the mountain home, with the pale, motherly face nodding in a cosy corner; the blackened rafters where the firelight dances with the shadow elves; child and dog asleep on the tumbled, homespun rug—all waiting.

*A dramatic sketch written for Short Stories. Copyrighted.

At last all is ready. In clear black outlines against the fading light stands the doomed man, and at his feet the narrow box; close in front faces the detail whose hardened hands are trembling as moistening eyes pretend to peer inquisitively at the smooth rifle barrels.

A parting glance on earth and sky. "Make ready!" Twenty guns spring to twenty waiting shoulders. "Aim! Fire!" A sharp rattle from twenty rifles, a straggling line of smoke and flame, a low moan from a figure that staggers for an instant, then pitches forward on the sodden earth—dead.

Dead—to sleep alone on the edge of the moaning forests, with only the chill Autumn winds to scatter withered leaves on the unknown grave. Broken hearts upon the mountain, waiting—down in the dimpled valley the matted grass grows long and damp over the sunken grave of the deserter.



STORY OF THE BAKED HEAD.

FAMOUS STORY SERIES.

The present Khon-Khor of Roum is a stanch Mussulman, and a rigid upholder of the true faith. Upon his coming to the throne he announced his intention of doing away with many customs common to the infidels, which had crept into the administration of the state during the reign of his predecessor; and he thought it his duty to endeavor to restore things to their primitive simplicity, and to adopt a mode of government purely Turkish. Accordingly he resumed a custom which had almost got into disuse—that of going about the city in tebdil, or disguise; and he was so careful about the disguises which he adopted, and the people whom he admitted into his secrets on these occasions, that he took all sorts of precautions, and invented all sorts of schemes of secrecy, in whatever related to his dresses, and the characters in which he chose to appear.

It is not long ago that considerable discontent prevailed throughout Turkey, and rebellion threatened to break out in Constantinople itself. He was then very anxious to ascertain the temper of the public mind; and, in his usual wary manner, determined to get a suit that would make him undiscoverable by even his own immediate attendants.

He usually sent for different tailors at different times, and in different places. On this occasion, he ordered his favorite slave, the white eunuch, Mansouri, to bring him one of no repute, with all the requisite secrecy, at midnight, in order that he might receive instructions about a dress.

The slave, in great humility, made his bash ustum (on my head be it), and went his way to execute the command.

Close to the gate of the Bezesten, or cloth-market, he saw an old man in a stall so narrow that he could scarce turn himself about in it, who was taken up in patching an old cloak. He was almost bent double with constant labor at his shop-board; and his eyes seemed not to have benefited by his application, for a pair of glasses were mounted on his nose. "This is precisely the man I want," said the slave to himself; "I am sure he can be of no repute." So intent was he upon his work that he did not heed the salutation of "Peace be with you, friend!" with which Mansouri ac-

costed him; and when he did look up, and saw the well-dressed personage who he thought had spoken, he continued his work without making the usual reply; for he could not suppose that the salutation was meant for such a poor devil as he.

However, finding that he was the object of the eunuch's attention, he doffed the spectacles, threw away his work, and was about getting on his legs, when he was stopped, and requested not to disturb himself.

"What is your name?" said Mansouri.

"Abdallah," said the tailor, "at your service; but I am generally called Babadul by my friends, and the world at large."

"You are a tailor, are you not?" continued the slave.

"Yes," said the other; "I am a tailor as well as the muezzin at the little mosque in the fish-market. What more can I do?"

"Well, Babadul," said Mansouri, "have you a mind for a job—a good job?"

"Am I a fool," answered the old man, "that I should dislike it? Say what it is."

"Softly, my friend," remarked the eunuch; "we must go on slow and sure. Will you suffer yourself to be led blindfolded, at midnight, wherever I choose to take you, for a job?"

"That's another question," said Babadul; "times are critical, heads fly in abundance, and a poor tailor's may go as well as a vizier's or a captain pacha's. But pay me well, and I believe I would make a suit of clothes for Eblis, the foul fiend, himself."

"Well, then, you agree to my proposal?" said the eunuch, who at the same time put two pieces of gold in his hand.

"Yes, most surely," said Babadul, "I agree. Tell me what I am to do, and you may depend upon me."

Accordingly they settled between them that the eunuch was to come to the stall at midnight, and lead him away blindfolded.

Babadul, being left alone, continued his work, wondering what could be the job upon which he was to be so mysteriously employed; and, anxious to make his wife a partaker of the news of his good luck, he shut up his stall earlier than usual, and went to his house, that was situated not far

from the mosque in the fish-market, of which he was the muezzin.

Old Dilferib, his wife, was almost as much bent double as her husband; and in consequence of the two gold pieces, and in contemplation of more which they expected to receive, they treated themselves to a dish of smoking kabobs, a salad, dried grapes, and sweetmeats, after which they consoled themselves with some of the hottest and most bitter coffee which the old woman could make.

True to his appointment, Babadul was at his stall at midnight, where he was as punctually met by Mansouri. Without any words, the former permitted himself to be blindfolded, whilst the latter led him away by the hand, making many and devious turns, until they reached the imperial seraglio; there stopping only to open the private iron gate, Mansouri introduced the tailor into the very heart of the sultan's private apartments. The bandage over his eyes was taken off in a dark chamber, lighted up only by a small lamp, which stood on the shelf surrounding the top of the room, but which was splendidly furnished by sofas of the richest brocade, and by carpets of the most costly manufacture. Here Babadul was commanded to sit until Mansouri returned with a bundle, wrapped in a large shawl-handkerchief; this being opened, a sort of dervish's dress was displayed to the tailor, and he was requested to look at it, to consider how long he would be making such a one, and then to return it again, duly folded up, to its shawl covering. In the meanwhile, Mansouri told him to stay there until he should return to take him away again, and then left him.

Babadul, having turned the dress over and over again, calculated each stitch, and come to a proper conclusion, packed it up in the handkerchief as he had been commanded; but no sooner had he done this than a man of lofty demeanor and appearance, whose look made the poor tailor shrink within himself, came into the room, took up the bundle, and walked away with it, without uttering a single word.

A few minutes after, as Babadul was pondering over the strangeness of his situation, a door opened in another part of the apartment, and a mysterious figure, richly dressed, came in, bearing a bundle, equally covered with a shawl, about the size of that which had just been taken away; and making the lowest prostrations before the tailor, in great apparent

trepidation, approached him, placed it at his feet, kissed the ground, and retreated without saying a word, or even looking up.

"Well," said Babadul, "this may be something very fine, and I may be some very great personage, for aught I know; but this is very certain, that I had rather be patching my old cloak in the stall than doing this job, however grand and lucrative it may be. Who knows what I may have been brought here for? These comings in and goings out of strange-looking people, apparently without tongues in their heads, do not argue well. I wish they would give me fewer bows and a greater supply of words, from which I might learn what I am to get by all this. I have heard of poor women having been sewn up in sacks and thrown into the sea. Who knows? perhaps I am destined to be the tailor on such an occasion.

He had scarcely got thus far in his soliloquy, when the slave Mansouri re-entered the room, and told him, without more words, to take up the bundle; which having done, his eyes were again blindfolded, and he was led to the spot from whence he came. Babadul, true to his agreement, asked no questions, but agreed with the slave that in three days the dress should be ready for delivery at his stall, for which he was to receive ten more pieces of gold.

Having got rid of his companion, he proceeded with all haste to his house, where he knew his wife would be impatiently waiting his return; and as he walked onwards he congratulated himself that at length he had succeeded in getting indeed a job worth the having, and that his fate had finally turned up something good for his old age. It was about two o'clock in the morning when he reached the door of his house. He was received by his wife with expressions of great impatience at his long absence; but when he held up the bundle to her face, as she held up the lamp to his, and when he said, "Mujdeh, give me a reward for good news: see, I have got my work, and a handsome reward we shall get when it is finished," she was all smiles and good humor.

"Leave it there till we get up, and let us go to bed now," said the tailor.

"No, no," said the wife, "I must look at what you have got before I retire, or I shall not be able to sleep;" upon which, whilst he held up the lamp, she opened the bundle.

Guess, guess at the astonishment of the tailor and his wife, when, instead of seeing a suit of clothes, they discovered wrapped in a napkin, in its most horrid and ghastly state, a human head !

It fell from the old woman's hands, and rolled away some paces, whilst the horror-struck couple first hid their faces with their hands, and then looked at each other with countenances which nothing can describe.

"Work!" cried the wife, "work, indeed! pretty work you have made of it! Was it necessary to go so far, and to take such precautions, to bring this misfortune on our heads? Did you bring home this dead man's head to make a suit of clothes of ?

"*Anna senna! Baba senna!* Curses be on his mother! Perdition seize his father!" exclaimed the poor tailor, "for bringing me into this dilemma. My heart misgave me as that dog of an eunuch talked of blindfoldings and silence to me. I thought, as true as I am a Turk, that the job could not consist only in making a suit of clothes; and sure enough this dog's son has tacked a head to it. Allah! Allah! what am I to do now? I know not the way to his home, or else I would take it back to him immediately, and throw it in his face. We shall have the bostangi bashi, and a hundred other bashis, here in a minute, and we shall be made to pay the price of blood, or, who knows, be hung, or drowned, or impaled! What shall we do, eh, Dilferib, my soul, say?"

"Do!" said his wife, "get rid of the head, to be sure. We have no more right to have it palmed upon us than anybody else."

"But the day will soon dawn," said the tailor, "and then it will be too late. Let us be doing something at once."

"A thought has struck me," said the old woman. "Our neighbor, the baker Hassan, heats his oven at this hour, and begins soon after to bake his bread for his morning's customers. He frequently has different sorts of things to bake from the neighboring houses, which are placed near the oven's mouth over night: Suppose I put this head into one of our earthen pots and send it to be baked; nobody will find it out until it is done, and then we need not send for it, so it will remain on the baker's hands."

Babadul admired his wife's sagacity, and forthwith she put her plan into execution. When the head had been placed in

a baking-pan, she watched a moment when nobody was at hand, and set it on the ground, in the same row with the other articles that were to be inserted in Hassan's oven. The old couple then double-barred the door of their house, and retired to rest, comforting themselves with the acquisition of the fine shawl and napkin in which the head had been wrapped.

The baker Hassan and his son Mahmûd were heating their oven, inserting therein thorns, chips, and old rubbish, at a great rate, when their attention was arrested by the extraordinary whinings and barking of a dog, that was a constant customer at the oven for stray bits of bread, and much befriended by Hassan and his son, who were noted for being conscientious Mussulmen.

"Look, Mahmûd," said the father to the son; "see what is the matter with the dog; something extraordinary is in the wind."

The son did what his father bade him; and seeing no reason for the dog's noises, said, "*Bir chey yok*, there is nothing," and drove him away.

But the howlings not ceasing, Hassan went himself, and found the dog most extremely intent upon smelling and pointing at the tailor's pipkin. He jumped upon Hassan, then at the pot, then upon Hassan again, until the baker no longer doubted that the beast took great interest in its contents. He therefore gently drew off the lid, when, need I mention his horror and surprise at seeing a human head staring him in the face?

"Allah! Allah!" cried the baker; but being a man of strong nerves, instead of letting it fall, as most people would have done, he quietly put on the lid again, and called his son to him.

"Mahmûd," said he, "this is a bad world, and there are bad men in it. Some wicked infidel has sent a man's head to bake; but, thanks to our good fortune, and to the dog, our oven has been saved from pollution, and we can go on making our bread with clean hands and clear conscience. But since the devil is at work, let others have a visit from him as well as ourselves. If it be known that we have had a dead man's head to bake, who will ever employ us again? We must starve, we must shut up our oven; we shall get the reputation of mixing up our dough with human grease, and

if perchance a hair is found, it will immediately be said that it came from the dead man's beard."

Mahmûd, a youth of about twenty, who partook of his father's insensibility and coolness, and who, moreover, had a great deal of dry humor and ready wit, looked upon the incident in the light of a good joke, and broke out into a hearty laugh when he saw the ugly picture which the grinning head made, set in its earthen frame.

"Let us pop it into the shop of Kior Ali, the barber opposite," said the youth, "he is just beginning to open it; and as he has but one eye, we shall be better able to do so without being seen. Do, father," said Mahmûd, "let me; nobody shall discover me; and let it be done before there is more daylight."

The father consented; and Mahmûd, catching the moment when the barber had walked to the corner of the street to perform certain ablutions, stepped into his shop, and placed the head on a sort of takcheh, or bracket on the wall, arranged some shaving towels about it, as if it had been a customer ready seated to be shaved, and, with a boy's mischief in his heart, stepped back to his oven again, to watch the effects which this new sort of customer would have upon the blind barber.

Kior Ali hobbled into his shop, which was but ill-lighted by a glimmering of daylight, that hardly pierced through the oil-papered windows, and looking about him, saw this figure, as he supposed seated against the wall, ready to be operated upon.

"Ha! peace be unto you!" said he to it; "you are rather early this morning; I did not see you at first. My water is not yet hot. Oh! I see you want your head shaved; but why do you take off your fez so soon? you will catch cold." Then he paused. "No answer," said the barber to himself. "I suppose he is dumb, and deaf too, perhaps. Well, I am half blind, so we are nearly upon equal terms; however, if I were even to lose my other eye," addressing himself to the head, "I dare say, my old uncle, I could shave you for all that; for my razor would glide as naturally over your head, as a draught of good wine does over my throat."

He went methodically about his preparations; he took down his tin basin from a peg, prepared his soap, then

stropped his razor on the long bit of leather that was fastened to his girdle. Having made his lather, he walked up to the supposed customer, holding the basin in his left hand, whilst his right was extended to sprinkle the first preparation of water on the sconce. No sooner had he placed his hand on the cold head, than he withdrew it as if he had been burnt. "Eh! why, what's the matter with you, friend?" said the barber; "you are as cold as a piece of ice." But when he attempted a second time to lather it, down it came with a terrible bounce from the shelf to the floor, and made the poor shaver jump quite across his shop with the fright.

"Aman! aman! O mercy! mercy! cried Kior Ali, as he thrust himself into the furthest corner without daring to move. "Take my shop, my razors, my towels—take all I have; but don't touch my life! If you are the Shaitan, speak; but excuse my shaving you!"

But when he found that all was hushed after the catastrophe, and that nothing was to be feared, he approached the head, and taking it up, by the lock of hair at the top, he looked at in amazement. "A head, by all the imams!" said he, accosting it; "and how did you get here? Do you want to disgrace me, you filthy piece of flesh? but you shall not! Although Kior Ali has lost one eye, yet his other is a sharp one, and knows what it is about. I would give you to the baker Hassan there, if his rogue of a son, who is now looking this way, was not even sharper than this self-same eye; but now I think of it, I will take you where you can do no harm. The Giaour Yanaki, the Greek kabobchi (roast-meat man), shall have you, and shall cut you up into mincemeat for his infidel customers." Upon this, Kior Ali, drawing in one hand, in which he carried the head, through the slit on the sides of his beniche, or cloak, and taking up his pipe in the other, walked down two streets to the shop of the afore-said Greek.

He frequented it in preference to that of a Mussulman, because he could here drink wine with impunity. From long practice, he knew precisely where the provision of fresh meat was kept; and, as he entered the shop, casting his eye furtively round, he threw the head in a dark corner, behind one of the large sides of a sheep that was to be used for the kabobs of the day. No one saw him perform this feat; for the morning was still sufficiently obscure to screen him. He

lighted his pipe at Yanaki's charcoal fire, and, as a pretext for his visit, ordered a dish of meat to be sent him for breakfast; a treat to which he thought himself fully entitled after his morning's adventure.

Yanaki, meanwhile, having cleaned his platters, put his skewers in order, lit his fires, made his sherbets, and swept out his shop, went to the larder for some meat for the shaver's breakfast. Yanaki was a true Greek—cunning, cautious, deceitful; cringing to his superiors, tyrannical towards his inferiors; detesting with a mortal hatred his proud masters, the Osmanlies, yet fawning, flattering and abject, whenever any of them, however low in life, deigned to take notice of him. Turning over his stock, he looked about for some odd bits that might serve the present purpose, muttering to himself that any carrion was good enough for a Turk's stomach. He surveyed his half sheep from top to bottom; felt it, and said, "No, this will keep;" but as he turned up its fat tail, the eye of the dead man's head caught his eye, and made him start, and step back some paces. "As ye love your eyes," exclaimed he, "who is there?" Receiving no answer, he looked again and again; then nearer—then, thrusting his hand among sheep's heads and trotters, old remnants of meat, and the like, he pulled out the head—the horrid head—which he held extended at arms length, as if he were afraid it would do him mischief. "Anathemas, attend your beard!" exclaimed Yanaki, as soon as he discovered, by the tuft of hair on the top, that it belonged to a Mussulman. "Och! if I had but every one of your heads in this manner, ye cursed race of Omar! I would make kabobs of them, and every cur in Constantinople should get fat for nothing. May ye all come to this end! May the vultures feed on your carcasses! and may every Greek have the good fortune which has befallen me this day, of having one of your worthless skulls for his football!" Upon which, in his rage, he threw it down and kicked it from him; but, recollecting himself, he said, "But after all, what shall I do with it? If it is seen here I am lost for ever; nobody will believe but what I have killed a Turk."

All of a sudden he cried out, in a sort of malicious ecstasy. "'Tis well I remembered—the Jew! the Jew!—a properer place for such a head was never thought or heard of; and there thou shall go, thou vile remnant of a Mahomedan!"

Upon which he seized it, and, hiding it under his coat, ran with it down the street to where the dead body of a Jew lay extended, with its head placed immediately between its legs.

In Turkey, when a Mahomedan is beheaded, his head is placed under his arm, by way of an honorable distinction from the Christian or Jew, who, when a similar misfortune befalls them, have theirs inserted between their legs.

It was in that situation, then, that Yanaki placed the Turk's head, putting it as near, cheek by jowl, with the Jew's as the hurry of the case would allow. He had been able to effect this without being seen, because the day was but still little advanced, and no one stirring; and he returned to his shop, full of exultation at having been able to discharge his feelings of hatred against his oppressors.

The unfortunate sufferer on this occasion had been accused of stealing and putting to death a Mahomedan child (a ceremony in their religion which they have been known to practice both in Turkey and Persia), and which created such an extraordinary tumult among the mob of Constantinople, that, in order to appease it, he had been decapitated. His execution had taken place purposely before the door of a wealthy Greek, and the body was ordered to remain there three days before it was permitted to be carried away for interment. The expectation that the Greek would be induced to pay down a handsome sum, in order that this nuisance might be removed from his door, and save him from the ill luck which such an object is generally supposed to bring, made the officer intrusted with the execution prefer this spot to every other. But, careless of the consequences, the Greek shut up the windows of his house, determined to deprive his oppressors of their expected perquisite; and so the dead Jew remained exposed his full time.

Few excepting those of the true faith ventured to approach the spot, fearful that the Mahomedan authorities would, in their wanton propensities to heap insults upon the Giaours, oblige some one of them to carry the carcase to the place of burial; and thus the horrid and disgusting object was left abandoned to itself, and this had given an opportunity to the kabobchi, Yanaki, to dispose of the head in the manner above related, unseen and unmolested. But when, as the day advanced and as the stir of the streets became more active, this additional head was

discovered, the crowd which gathered about it became immense. It was immediately rumored that a miracle had been performed; for a dead Jew was to be seen with two heads. The extraordinary intelligence flew from mouth to mouth, until the whole city was in an uproar, and all were running to see the miracle. The Sanhedrim immediately pronounced that something extraordinary was about to happen to their persecuted race. Rabbis were to be seen running to and fro, and their whole community was now poured around the dead body, in expectation that he would perhaps arise, put on his heads, and deliver them from the gripe of their oppressors.

But as ill luck would have it for them, a Janissary, who had mixed in the crowd, and had taken a close survey of the supernumerary head, exclaimed, in a mixture of doubt and amazement, "Allah, Allah, il Allah! these are no infidels' heads. One is the head of our lord and master, the Aga of the Janissaries." Upon which, seeing more of his companions, he called them to him, and making known his discovery, they became violent with rage, and set off to communicate their intelligence to their Orta.

The news spread like wildfire throughout the whole of the corps of the Janissaries, and a most alarming tumult was immediately excited; for it seems that it was unknown in the capital that their chief, to whom they were devotedly attached, and one of their own selection, had been put to death.

"What!" said they, "is it not enough to deal thus treacherously with us, and deprive us of a chief to whom we are attached; but we must be treated with the greatest contempt that it is possible for men to receive? What! the head of our most noble Aga of the Janissaries to be placed upon the most ignoble part of a Jew. What are we come to? We alone are not insulted; the whole of Islam is insulted, degraded, debased. No. This is unheard of insolence, a stain never to be wiped off, without the extermination of the whole race. And what dog has done this deed? How did the head get there? Is it that dog of a Vizier's work, or have the Reis Effendi and those traitors of Frank ambassadors been at work? Wallah, Billah, Tullah! by the holy Caaba, by the beard of Osman, and by the sword of Omar, we will be revenged!"

We must leave the tumult to rage for a short time; we

must request the reader to imagine a scene, in which Jews are flying in all directions, hiding themselves with great precaution against enraged Turks, who, with expressions like those just mentioned in their mouths, are to be seen walking about in groups, armed to their teeth with pistols and cimeters, and vowing vengeance upon everything which came in their way. He must imagine a city of narrow streets and low houses, thronged with a numerous population, in dresses the most various in shape and the most lively in colors, all anxious, all talking, all agog as if something extraordinary was to happen; in the midst of whom I will leave him, to take a look into the interior of the sultan's seraglio, and to inquire in what his eminency himself had been engaged since we last noticed him.

On the very same night of the tailor's attendance, the sultan had given a secret order for taking off the head of the Aga of the Janissaries (the fomenter of all the disturbances which had lately taken place among his corps, and consequently their idol); and so anxious was he about the execution, that he had ordered it to be brought to him the moment it was off. The man entrusted with the execution, upon entering the room where he had been directed to bring the head, seeing some one seated, naturally took him for the sultan, and, without daring to look up, he immediately placed the burden at his feet, with the prostrations which we have already described as having been performed before the tailor. The sultan, who not a minute before had taken away the bundle containing the dervish's dress, had done so with the intention of deceiving his slave Mansouri himself—so desirous was he of being unknown in his new disguise even to him—and intended to have substituted another in its stead; but not calculating either upon the reception of the head, or upon Mansouri's immediate return to the tailor, he was himself completely puzzled how to act when he found the tailor was gone, led off by his slave. To have sent after them would have disconcerted his schemes, and therefore he felt himself obliged to await Mansouri's return before he could get an explanation of what had happened; for he knew that they would not have gone away without the dress, and that dress he had then in his possession. In the meanwhile, anxious and impatient to know what had become of the expected head, he sent for the officer who was intrusted with the exe-

cution, and the astonishment of both may be imagined when an explanation took place.

"By my beard," exclaimed the sultan, having thought awhile within himself; "by my beard, the tailor must have got the head!"

His impatience for Mansouri's return then became extreme. In vain he fretted, fumed, and cried "Allah! Allah!" It did not make the slave return a minute sooner, who, good man, would have gone quietly to rest had he not been called upon to appear before the sultan.

As soon as he was within hearing he called out, "Ahi! Mansouri, run immediately to the tailor, he has got the head of the Aga of the Janissaries instead of the dervish's dress; run, fetch it without loss of time, or something unfortunate will happen!" He then explained how this untoward event had occurred. Mansouri, now in his turn, felt himself greatly embarrassed; for he only knew the road to the tailor's stall, but was totally unacquainted with his dwelling-house. However, rather than excite his master's anxiety in a higher degree, he set off in quest of the tailor, and went straight to his stall, in the hopes of hearing from his neighbors where his house was. It was too early in the day for the opening of the Bezestan, and except a coffee-house that had just prepared for the reception of customers, where he applied and could gain no intelligence, he found himself completely at a standstill. By the greatest good luck, he recollected Babadul had told him that he was the muezzin to the little mosque in the fish-market, and thither he immediately bent his steps. The azan, or morning invitation to prayers, was now chanting forth from all the minarets, and he expected he might catch the purloiner of the head in the very act of inviting the faithful to prayers.

As he approached the spot he heard an old, broken and tremulous voice, which he imagined might be Babadul's, breaking the stillness of the morning by all the energy of his lungs; and he was not mistaken, for as he stood under the minaret, he perceived the old man walking round the gallery which encircles it, with his hand applied to the back of his ear, and with his mouth wide open, pouring out his whole throat in the execution of his office. As soon as the tailor saw Mansouri making signs to him, the profession of faith stuck in his throat; and between the fright of being brought

to account for the head, and the words which he had to pronounce, it is said that he made so strange a jumble that some of the stricter Mussulmans, his neighbors, who were paying attention to the call, professed themselves quite scandalized at his performance. He descended with all haste, and locking the door after him which led up the winding staircase, he met Mansouri in the street. He did not wait to be questioned respecting the fate of the horrid object, but at once attacked the slave concerning the trick, as he called it, which had been put upon him.

"Are you a man," said he, "to treat a poor man like me in the manner you have done, as if my house was a charnel-house? I suppose you will ask me the price of blood next?"

"Friend," said Mansouri, "what are you talking about? Do you not see that it has been a mistake?"

"A mistake, indeed!" cried the tailor; "a mistake done on purpose to bring a poor man into trouble. One man laughs at my stupid beard, and makes me believe that I am to make a suit of clothes for him; another takes away the pattern, and a third substitutes a dead man's head for it. Allah! Allah! I have got into the hands of a pretty nest of rogues, a set of ill-begotten knaves!"

Upon which Mansouri placed his hand upon the tailor's mouth, and said, "Say no more, say no more; you are getting deeper into the dirt. Do you know whom you are abusing?"

"I know not, nor care not," answered Babadul; "all I know is that whoever gives me a dead man's head for a suit of clothes can only be an infidel dog."

"Do you call God's viceregent upon earth, you old demi-stitching, demi-praying fool, an infidel dog?" exclaimed Mansouri in a rage, which entirely made him forget the precaution he had hitherto maintained concerning his employer. "Are your vile lips to defile the name of him who is the Alem penah, the refuge of the world? What dirt are you eating, what ashes are you heaping on your head? Come, no more words; tell me where the dead man's head is, or I will take yours off in his stead."

Upon hearing this, the tailor stood with his mouth wide open, as if the doors of his understanding had just been unlocked.

"Aman, aman, mercy, mercy, O aga!" cried Babadul

to Mansouri, "I was ignorant of what I was saying. Who would have thought it? Ass, fool, dolt that I am, not to have known better. Bismillah! in the name of the Prophet, pray come to my house; your steps will be fortunate, and your slave's head will touch the stars."

"I am in a hurry, a great hurry," said Mansouri. "Where is the head, the head of the Aga of the Janissaries?"

When the tailor heard whose head it had been, and recollected what he and his wife had done with it, his knees knocked under him with fear, and he began to exude from every pore.

"Where is it, indeed?" said he. "Oh! what has come upon us! Oh! what cursed kismet (fate) is this!"

"Where is it?" exclaimed the slave again and again, "where is it? Speak quick!"

The poor tailor was completely puzzled what to say, and kept floundering from one answer to another, until he was quite entangled as in a net.

"Have you burnt it?"

"No."

"Have you thrown it away?"

"No."

"Then, in the name of the Prophet, what have you done with it? Have you eaten it?"

"No."

"Is it lying in your house?"

"No."

"Is it hiding in any other person's house?"

"No."

Then, at last, quite out of patience, the slave Mansouri took Babadul by his beard, and shaking his head for him, exclaimed, with a roar, "Then tell me, you old dotard! what is it doing?"

"It is baking," answered the tailor, half choked. "I have said it."

"Baking! did you say?" exclaimed the slave in the greatest amazement. "What did you bake it for? Are you going to eat it?"

"True, I said; what would you have more?" answered Babadul, "It is now baking." And then he gave a full account of what he and his wife had done in the sad dilemma in which they had been placed.

"Show me the way to the baker's," said Mansouri; "at least we shall get it in its singed state, if we can get it in no other. Who ever thought of baking the head of the Aga of the Janissaries? Allah il Allah!"

They then proceeded to the baker Hassan's, who was now about taking his bread from the oven. As soon as he became acquainted with their errand, he did not hesitate in telling all the circumstances attending the transmission of the head from the pipkin to the barber's bracket, happy to have had an opportunity of exculpating himself of what might possibly have been brought up against him as a crime.

The three (Mansouri, the tailor, and the baker) then proceeded to the barber's, and inquired from him what he had done with the head of his earliest customer.

Kior Ali, after some hesitation, made great assurances that he looked upon this horrid object as a donation from Eblis himself, and consequently that he had thought himself justified in transferring it over to the Giaour Yanaki, who, he had no doubt, had already made his brother infidels partake of it in the shape of kabobs. Full of wonder and amazement, invoking the Prophet at each step, and uncertain as to the result of such unheard-of adventures, they then added the barber to their party, and proceeded to Yanaki's cook shop.

The Greek, confounded at seeing so many of the true believers enter his house, had a sort of feeling that their business was not of roast meat, but that they were in search of meat of a less savory nature. As soon as the question had been put to him concerning the head, he stoutly denied having seen it, or knowing anything at all concerning it.

The barber showed the spot where he had placed it, and swore it upon the Koran.

Mansouri had undertaken the investigation of the point in question, when they discovered symptoms of the extraordinary agitation that prevailed in the city in consequence of the discovery which had been made of the double-headed Jew, and of the subsequent discovery that had produced such great sensation among the whole corps of the Janissaries.

Mansouri, followed by the tailor, the baker, and the barber, then proceeded to the spot where the dead Israelite was prostrate; and there, to their astonishment, they each recognized their morning visitor—the head so long sought after.

Yanaki, the Greek, in the meanwhile, conscious of what was likely to befall him, without loss of time gathered what money he had ready at hand, and fled the city.

"Where is the Greek?" said Mansouri, turning round to look for him, in the supposition that he had joined his party; "we must all go before the sultan."

"I dare say he has run off," said the barber. "I am not so blind but I can see that he it is who gifted the Jew with his additional head."

Mansouri now would have carried off the head; but, surrounded as it was by a band of enraged and armed soldiers, who vowed vengeance upon him who had deprived them of their chief, he thought it most prudent to withdraw. Leading with him his three witnesses, he at once proceeded to the presence of his master.

When Mansouri had informed the sultan of all that had happened, where he had found the head of the Aga of the Janissaries, how it had got there, and of the tumult it had raised, the reader may better imagine than I can describe the state of the monarch's mind. To tell the story with all its particulars he felt would be derogatory to his dignity, for it was sure to cover him with ridicule; but, at the same time, to let the matter rest as it stood was impossible, because the tumult would increase until there would be no means of quelling it, and the affair might terminate by depriving him of his crown, together with his life.

He remained in a state of indecision for some time, twisting up the ends of his mustachios, and muttering "Allah! Allah!" in low ejaculations, until at length he ordered the Prime Vizier and Mûfti to his presence.

Alarmed by the abruptness of the summons, these two great dignitaries arrived at the imperial gate in no enviable state of mind; but when the sultan had informed them of the tumult raging in the capital, they resumed their usual tranquility.

After some deliberation it was resolved that the tailor, the baker, the barber, and the kabochi should appear before the tribunal of the Mûfti, accused of having entered into a conspiracy against the Aga of the Janissaries, and stealing his head, for the purposes of baking, shaving, and roasting it, and that they should be condemned to pay the price of his blood; but as the kabochi had been the immediate cause of the

tumult by treating the head with such gross and unheard-of insult, and as he was a Greek and an infidel, it was further resolved that the Mûfti should issue a fetwah, authorizing his head to be cut off, and placed on the same odious spot where he had exposed that of the Aga of the Janissaries.

It was then agreed between the sultan and the grand vizier that, in order to appease the Janissaries, a new Aga should be appointed who was agreeable to them, and that the deceased should be buried with becoming distinction. All this (except killing the Greek, who had fled) was done, and tranquility again restored to the city. But it must further be added, to the honor of the sultan, that he not only paid every expense which the tailor, the baker, and the barber were condemned to incur, but also gave them each a handsome reward for the difficulties into which they had so unfortunately been thrown.



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(See p. 251.)





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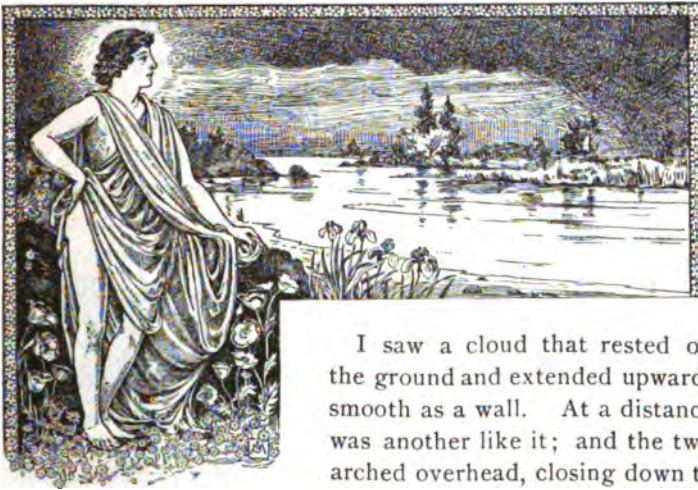
SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

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ETCHING: 'A VISION OF LIFE.*

By J. H. CRANSON.



I saw a cloud that rested on the ground and extended upward, smooth as a wall. At a distance was another like it; and the two arched overhead, closing down to the ground on either side about a narrow space, along which flowed a river, swift and turbid. The cloud-walls were dark and impenetrable to the sight, and hid the horizon and the sky.

And the river seemed to spring from the foot of one cloud and disappeared at the other. A man stood by the river, looking up and down it and above and around; and he saw nothing but the flowing waters and the impenetrable clouds—and he seemed perplexed and anxious.

Then there came three others and stood by him. The first was young and of quick and confident manner. In his hands he held a balance, a crucible and a measuring rod—and he spoke to the man and said:

“This river is human life. It begins at the upper cloud-wall, which is *birth*; it ends at the other



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wall, which is *death*. There is no more of it; I have weighed it and measured it and analyzed it. This is TRUTH!"



And the second was an old man, and in his hands was an open book; and he said:

"This river is human life. It begins at the birth-cloud, but it ends not at the death-cloud. It passes through and flows on forever. It is so written. This is TRUTH!"

And the third was older than the second, and in his hands was an up-rooted plant on which were buds, flowers, and ripened fruit. And he said:

"This river is human life. It begins not at the birth-cloud; it ends not at the death-cloud. Its sources are in the eternal past, and its current flows on in the eternal future. Behold in this plant the law of development! This is TRUTH!"

And the man looked at the three visitors and his perplexity and anxiety seemed to increase.

And the clouds settled down and drew together and hid them all; and I heard the man cry out from the darkness, "WHAT IS TRUTH?"

And the clouds gave back echoes, broken and unintelligible.



— KOOSJE; A STUDY OF DUTCH LIFE

BY JOHN STRANGE WINTER.

Her name was Koosje van Kampen, and she lived in Utrecht—that most quaint of quaint cities—the Venice of the north.

All her life had been passed under the shadow of the grand old Dom Kerk; she had played bo-peep behind the columns and arcades of the ruined moss-grown cloisters; had slipped up and fallen down the steps leading to the grachts; had once or twice, in this very early life, been fished out of those same slimy, stagnant waters; had wandered under the great lindens in the Baan, and gazed curiously up at the stork's nest in the tree by the Veterinary School; had pattered about the hollow-sounding streets in her noisy wooden klompen; had danced and laughed, had quarrelled and wept, and fought and made friends again, to the tune of the silver chimes high up in the Dom—chimes that were sometimes old Nederlandsche hymns, sometimes Mendelssohn's melodies and tender "Lieder ohne Worte."

But that was ever so long ago, and now she had left her romping childhood behind her, and had become a maid-servant—a very dignified and aristocratic maid-servant indeed—with no less a sum than eight pounds ten a year in wages.

She lived in the house of a professor, who dwelt on the Munster-Kerkhoff, one of the most aristocratic parts of that wonderfully aristocratic city; and once or twice every week you might have seen her, if you had been there to see, busily engaged in washing the red tile and blue slate pathway in front of the professor's house. You would have seen that she was very pleasant to look at, this Koosje, very comely and clean, whether she happened to be very busy or whether it had been Sunday, and with her very best gown on she was out for a promenade in the Baan, after duly going to service; for Koosje was strictly orthodox, and attended service as regularly as the Sabbath dawned, in the grand old Gothic choir of the cathedral.

During the week she wore always the same costume as does every other servant in the country: a skirt of black stuff, short enough to show a pair of very neat-set and well-turned ankles, clad in cloth shoes and knitted stockings that showed no wrinkles; over the skirt a bodice and a kirtle of lilac, made with a neatly gathered frilling about her round, brown throat. Above the frilling, five or six rows of unpolished garnet beads, fastened by a massive clasp of gold filigree, and on her head a spotless white cap tied with a neat bow under her chin—as neat, let me tell you, as an Englishman's tie at a party.

But it was on Sunday that Koosje shone forth in all the glory of a black gown and her jewelry—with great earrings to match the clasp of her necklace, and a heavy chain and cross to match that again, and one or two rings; while on her head she wore an immense cap, much too big to put a bonnet over, though for walking she was most particular to have gloves.

Then, indeed, she was a young person to be treated with respect, and with respect she was undoubtedly treated. As she passed along the quaint resounding streets, many a head was turned to look after her, but Koosje went on her way like the staid maiden she was, duly impressed with the fact that she was principal servant of Professor van Dijck, the most celebrated authority on the study of osteology in Europe. So Koosje never heeded the looks, turned her head neither to the right nor to the left, but went sedately on her business or pleasure, whichever it happened to be.

It was not likely that such a treasure could remain long unnoticed and unsought after. Servants in the Netherlands, I hear, are not so good but that they might be better; and most people knew what a treasure Professor van Dijck had in his Koosje. However, as the professor conscientiously raised her wages from time to time Koosje never thought of leaving him.

But there is one bribe no woman can resist—the bribe that is offered by Love. As Professor van Dijck had expected and feared, that bribe ere long was held out to Koosje, and Koosje was too weak to resist it. Not that he wished her to do so. If the girl had a chance of settling well and happily for life, he would be the last to dream of throwing any obstacle in her way. He had come to be an old man himself—

he lived all alone, save for his servants, in a great rambling house, whose huge apartments were all set out with horrible anatomical preparations and grisly skeletons; and, though the stately passages were paved with white marble, and led into rooms which would easily have accommodated crowds of guests, he went into no society save that of savants as old and fossil-like as himself—in other words, he was an old bachelor who lived entirely for his profession and study of the great masters by the interpretation of a genuine old Stradivari. Yet the old professor had a memory; he recalled the time when he had been young who now was old—the time when his heart was a good deal more tender, his blood a great deal warmer, and his fancy very much more easily stirred than nowadays. There was a dead and gone romance which had broken his heart, sentimentally speaking—a romance long since crumbled into dust, which had sent him for comfort into the study of osteology and the music of the Stradivari; yet the memory thereof made him considerably more lenient to Koosje's weakness than Koosje herself had ever expected to find him.

Not that she had intended to tell him at first—she was only three-and-twenty—aud, though Jan van der Welde was as fine a fellow as could be seen in Utrecht, and had good wages and something put by, Koosje was by no means inclined to rush headlong into matrimony with undue hurry. It was more pleasant to live in the professor's good house, to have delightful walks arm in arm with Jan under the trees in the Baan, or round the Singels, parting under the stars with many a lingering word and promise to meet again. It was during one of those very partings that the professor suddenly became aware, as he walked placidly home, of the change that had come into Koosje's life.

However, Koosje told him blushing that she did not wish to leave him just at present, so he did not trouble himself about the matter; he was a wise man, this old authority on osteology, and quoted oftentimes, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

So the courtship sped smoothly on, seeming for once to contradict the truth of the old saying, "The course of true love never did run smooth." The course of their love did, of a truth, run marvellously smooth indeed. Koosje, if a trifle coy, was pleasant and sweet; Jan as fine a fellow as

ever waited round a corner on a cold winter night. So, brightly the happy days slipped by, when suddenly a change was effected in the professor's household, which made, as a matter of course, somewhat of a change in Koosje's life. It came about in this wise.

Koosje had been on an errand for the professor, one that had kept her out of doors some time, and it happened that the night was bitterly cold—the cold indeed was fearful. The air had that damp rawness so noticeable in Dutch climate, a thick mist overhung the city, and a drizzling rain came down with a steady persistence such as quickly soaked through the stoutest and thickest garments. The streets were well-nigh empty. The great thoroughfare, the Oude Gracht, was almost deserted, and as Koosje hurried along the *Meinerbroederstraat*—for she had a second commission there—she drew her great shawl more tightly round her, muttering crossly: "What weather! yesterday so warm, to-day so cold. 'Tis enough to give one the fever."

She delivered her message, and ran on through Oude Kerkhoff as fast as her feet could carry her, when, just as she turned the corner into the *Domplein*, a fierce gust of wind, accompanied by a blinding shower of rain, assailed her, her foot caught against something soft and heavy, and she fell.

"Bless us!" she ejaculated, blankly. "What fool has left a bundle out on the path on such a night? Pitch dark, with half the lamps out, and rain and mist enough to blind one."

She gathered herself up, rubbing elbows and knees vigorously, casting the while dark glances at the obnoxious bundle which had caused the disaster. Just then the wind was lulled, the lamp close at hand gave out a steady light, which shed its rays through the fog upon Koosje and the bundle, from which, to the girl's horror and dismay, came a faint moan. Quickly she drew nearer, when she perceived that what she had believed to be a bundle was indeed a woman, apparently in the last stage of exhaustion.

Koosje tried to lift her; but the dead weight was beyond her, young and strong as she was. Then the rain and the wind came on again, in fiercer gusts than before; the woman's moans grew louder and louder, and what to do Koosje knew not.

She struggled on for the few steps that lay between her

and the professor's house, and then she rang a peal which resounded through the echoing passages, bringing Dortje, the other maid, running out; after the manner of her class, imagining all sorts of terrible catastrophes had happened. She uttered a cry of relief when she perceived it was only Koosje, who, without vouchsafing any explanation, dashed past her and ran straight into the professor's room.

"Oh, professor!" she gasped out; but between her efforts to remove the woman, her struggle with the elements, and her race down the passage, her breath was utterly gone.

The professor looked up from his book and his tea-tray in surprise. For a moment he thought that Koosje, his domestic treasure, had altogether taken leave of her senses; for she was streaming with water, covered with mud, and head and cap were in a state of disorder, such as neither he nor any one else had ever seen them in since the last time she had been fished out of the Nieuwe Gracht.

"What is the matter, Koosje?" he asked, regarding her gravely over his spectacles.

"There's a woman outside—dying," she panted. "I fell over her."

"You had better try to get her in, then," the old gentleman said, in quite a relieved tone. "You and Dortje must bring her in. Dear, dear, poor soul! but it is a dreadful night."

The old gentleman shivered as he spoke, and drew a little nearer to the tall white porcelain stove.

It was, as he had said a minute before, a terrible night. He could hear the wind beating about the house and rattling about the casements, and moaning down the chimneys. And to think any poor soul should be out on such a night *dying*. Heaven preserve others who might be belated or houseless in any part of the world!

He fell into a fit of abstraction—a habit not uncommon with learned men—wondering why life should be so different with different people. Why he should be in that warm, handsome room, with its soft rich hangings and carpet, with its beautiful furniture of carved wood, its pictures, and the rare china scattered here and there among the grim array of skeletons, which were his delight. He wondered why he should take his tea out of costly and valuable oriental china, sugar and cream out of antique silver, while other poor souls

had no tea at all, and nothing to take it out of even if they had. He wondered why he should have a lamp under his teapot, that was a very marvel of art-transparencies. Why he should have every luxury, and this poor creature should be dying in the street, amid the wind and the rain. It was all very unequal.

It was very odd, the professor argued, leaning his back against the tall warm stove—it was very odd indeed. He began to feel that grand as the study of osteology undoubtedly is, he ought not to permit it to become so engrossing as to blind him to the study of the greater philosophies of life. His reverie was, however, broken by the abrupt re-entrance of Koosje, who this time was a trifle less breathless than she had been before.

"We have got her into the kitchen, professor," she announced. "She is a child—a mere baby, and so pretty! She has opened her eyes and spoken."

"Give her some soup and wine—hot," said the professor, without stirring.

"But won't you come?" she asked.

The professor hesitated—he hated attending in cases of illness, though he was a properly qualified doctor and in an emergency would lay his prejudice aside.

"Or shall I run across for the good Dr. Smit?" Koosje asked. "He would come in a minute, only it is *such* a night!"

At that moment a fiercer gust than before rattled at the casements, and the professor laid aside his scruples.

He followed his housekeeper down the chilly marble-flagged passage into the kitchen, where he never went for months together. A cozy enough, pleasant place, with a deep valance hanging from the mantel-shelf, with many great copper pans, bright and shining as new gold, and furniture all scrubbed to the whiteness of snow.

In an arm-chair before the opened stove sat the rescued girl—a slight, golden-haired thing, with wistful blue eyes, and a frightened air. Every moment she caught her breath in a half-hysterical sob; while violent shivers shook her from head to foot.

The professor went and looked at her over his spectacles, as if she had been some curious specimen of his favorite study; but at the same time he kept at a respectful distance from her.

"Give her some soup and wine," he said at length, putting his hands under the tails of his long dressing-gown of flowered cashmere. "Some soup and wine—hot; and put her to bed."

"Is she then to remain for the night?" Koosje asked a little surprised.

"Oh, don't send me away!" the golden-haired girl broke out, in a voice that was positively a wail, and clasping a pair of pretty slender hands in piteous supplication.

"Where do you come from?" the old gentleman asked, much as if he expected she might suddenly jump up and bite him.

"From Beijerland, mynheer," she answered with a sob.

"So! Koosje, she is remarkably well dressed, is she not?" the professor said, glancing at the costly lace head-gear, the heavy gold head-piece, which lay on the table together with the great gold spiral ornaments and filigree pendants—a dazzling head of richness. He looked too at the girl's white hands, at the rich crape-laden gown, at her delicate beauty, and shower of waving golden hair, which, released from the confinement of the cap and head-piece, floated in a rich mass of glittering beauty over the pillows which his servant had placed beneath her head.

The professor was old—the professor was wholly given up to his profession which he jokingly called his sweetheart: and though he cut half of his acquaintances in the street through inattention and the shortness of his sight, he had eyes in his head, and upon occasions could use them. He therefore repeated the question.

"Very well dressed indeed, professor," returned Koosje promptly.

"And what are you doing in Utrecht—in such a plight as this, too?" he asked, still keeping at a safe distance.

"Oh, mynheer, I am all alone in the world," she answered, her blue misty eyes filled with tears. "I had a month ago a dear, good, kind father, but he has died, and I am indeed desolate. I always believed him rich, and to these things," with a gesture that included her dress and the ornaments on the table, "I have ever been accustomed. Thus, I ordered without consideration such clothes as I thought needful. And then I found there was nothing for me, not a hundred guilders to call my own, when all was paid."

"But what brought you to Utrecht?"

"He sent me here, mynheer. In his last illness, only of three days' duration, he bade me gather all together and come to this city, where I was to ask for a *Mevrouw Baake*, his cousin."

"*Mevrouw Baake* of the *Sigaren Fabriek*," said *Dortje* in an aside to the others. "I lived servant with her before I came here."

"I had heard very little about her, only my father had sometimes mentioned his cousin to me; they had once been betrothed," the stranger continued. "But when I reached Utrecht I found she was dead—two years dead. But we had never heard of it."

"Dear, dear, dear!" exclaimed the professor, pityingly. "Well, you had better let *Koosje* put you to bed, and we will see what can be done for you in the morning."

"Am I to make up a bed?" *Koosje* asked, following him along the passage.

The professor wheeled round and faced her.

"She had better sleep in the guest-room," he said, thoughtfully, regardless of the cold, which struck to his slippered feet from the marble floor. "That is the only room which does not contain specimens that would probably frighten the poor child. I am very much afraid, *Koosje*," he concluded, doubtfully, "that she is a lady; and what we are to do with a lady, I can't think."

With that the old gentleman shuffled off to his cosy room, and *Koosje* turned back to her kitchen.

"He'll never think of marrying her," mused *Koosje*, rather blankly. If she had spoken the thoughts to the professor himself, she would have received a very emphatic assurance, that much as the study of osteology and the *Stradivari* had blinded him to the affairs of this work-a-day world, he was not yet so thoroughly foolish as to join his fossilized wisdom to the ignorance of a child of sixteen or seventeen.

However, on the morrow matters assumed a somewhat different aspect. *Gertrude van Floote* proved to be not exactly a gentlewoman. It is true that her father had been a well-to-do man for his station in life, and had very much spoiled and indulged his one motherless child. Yet her education was so slight, that she could do little more than read and

write, besides speaking a little English, which she had picked up from the yachtsmen frequenting her native town. The professor found she had been but a distant relative of the *Mevrouw Baake*, to seek whom she had come to Utrecht, and that she had no kinsfolk upon whom she could depend—a fact which accounted for the profusion of her jewelry, all her golden trinkets having descended to her as heirlooms."

"I can be your servant, *mynheer*," she suggested. "Indeed, I am a very useful girl, as you will find, if you will but try me."

Now, as a rule, the professor vigorously set his face against admitting young servants into his house. They broke his china, they disarranged his bones, they meddled with his papers and made general havoc. So, in truth, he was not very willing to have *Gertrude van Floote* as a permanent member of his household, and he said so.

But *Koosje* had taken a fancy to the girl, and having an eye to her own departure at no very distant date—for she had been betrothed more than two years—she pleaded so hard to keep her, promising to train her in all the professor's ways, to teach her the value of old china and osteologic specimens, that eventually, with a good deal of grumbling, the old gentleman gave way, and being a wise as well as an old gentleman, went back to his studies, dismissing *Koosje* and the girl alike from his thoughts.

Just at first *Truide*, poor child, was charmed.

She put away her splendid ornaments, and some lilac frocks and black skirts were purchased for her. Her box, which she had left at the station, supplied all that was necessary for Sunday.

It was great fun! For a whole week this young person danced about the rambling old house, playing at being a servant. Then she began to grow a little weary of it all. She had been accustomed, of course, to performing such offices as all Dutch ladies fulfill—the care of china, of linen, the dusting of rooms and the like; but she had done them as a mistress, not as an underling. And that was not the worst; it was when it came to her pretty feet having to be thrust into *klompen*, and her having to take a pail and syringe and mop and clean the windows and the pathway and the front of the house, that the game of maid-servant began to assume a very different aspect. When, after having been as free as

air to come and go as she chose, she was only permitted to attend service on Sundays, and to take an hour's promenade with Dortje, who was dull and heavy, and stupid, she began to feel positively desperate, and the result of it all was that when Jan van der Welde came, as he was accustomed to do nearly every evening, to see Koosje, Miss Truide, from sheer longing for excitement and change, began to make eyes at him with what effect I will endeavor to show.

Just at first Koosje noticed nothing. She herself was of so faithful a nature, that an idea, a suspicion of Jan's faithlessness, never entered her mind. When the girl laughed and blushed, and dimpled and smiled, when she cast her great blue eyes at the big young fellow, Koosje only thought how pretty she was, and it was just a thousand pities she had not been born a great lady.

And thus weeks slipped over. Never very demonstrative herself, Koosje saw nothing. Dortje, for her part, saw a great deal, but Dortje was a woman of few words, one who quite believed in the saying, "If speech is silver, silence is gold"; so she held her peace.

Now Truide, rendered fairly frantic by her enforced confinement to the house, grew to look upon Jan as her only chance of excitement and distraction; and Jan, poor, thick-headed noodle of six feet high, was thoroughly wretched. What to do he knew not. A strange, mad, fierce passion for Truide had taken possession of him, and an utter distaste, almost dislike, had come in place of the old love for Koosje. Truide was unlike anything he had ever come in contact with before; she was so fairy-like, so light, so delicate, so dainty. Against Koosje's plumper, maturer charms, she appeared to the infatuated young man like—if he had ever heard of it, he would probably have said like a Dresden china image; but since he had not, he compared her in his own foolish heart to an angel. Her feet were so tiny, her hands so soft, her eyes so expressive, her waist so slim, her manner so bewitching. Somehow, Koosje was altogether different; he could not endure the touch of her heavy hand, the tones of her less refined voice; he grew impatient at the denser perceptions of her mind. It was very foolish, very short-sighted; for the hands, though heavy, were clever and willing—the voice, though a trifle coarser in accent than Truide's childish tones, would never tell him a lie—the perceptions, though

not brilliant were the perceptions of good every-day common-sense. It really was very foolish, for what charmed him most in Truide was the merest outside polish, a certain ease of manner which doubtless she had caught from the English aristocrats whom she had known in her native place. She had not half the sterling good qualities and steadfastness of Koosje; but Jan was in love, and did not stop to argue the matter as you or I are able to do. Men in love — very wise and great men, too — are often like Jan van der Welde. They lay aside *pro tem.* the whole amount, be it great or small, of wisdom they possess. And it must be remembered that Jan van der Welde was neither a wise nor a great man.

Well, in the end there came what the French call *un dénouement* — what we in forcible modern English would call a *smash* — and it happened thus. It was one evening toward the summer that Koosje's eyes were suddenly opened, and she became aware of the free and easy familiarity of Truide's manner toward her betrothed lover, Jan. It was some very slight and trivial thing that led her to notice it, but in an instant the whole truth flashed across her mind.

"Leave the kitchen!" she said, in a tone of authority.

But it happened that, at the very instant she spoke, Jan was furtively holding Truide's fingers under the cover of the table-cloth; and when, on hearing the sharp words, the girl would have snatched them away, he, with true masculine instinct of opposition, held them fast.

"What do you mean by speaking to her like that?" he demanded, an angry flush overspreading his dark face.

"What is the maid to you?" Koosje asked, indignantly.

"Maybe more than you are," he retorted, in answer to which Koosje deliberately marched out of the kitchen, leaving them alone.

To say she was indignant, would be but very mildly to express the state of her feelings — she was *furios*. She knew that the end of her romance had come. No thoughts of making friends with Jan entered her mind — only a great storm filled her heart, till it was ready to burst with pain and anguish.

As she went along the passage the professor's bell sounded, and Koosje, being close to the door, went abruptly in. The professor looked up in mild astonishment, quickly enough changed to dismay as he caught sight of his valued Koosje's

face, from out of which anger seemed in a moment to have thrust all the bright comely beauty.

"How now, my good Koosje?" said the old gentleman. "Is aught amiss?"

"Yes, professor, there is," returned Koosje, all in a blaze of anger, and moving as she spoke, the tea-tray, which she set down upon the oaken buffet with a bang, which made its fair and delicate freight fairly jingle again.

"But you needn't break my china, Koosje," suggested the old gentleman, mildly, rising from his chair and getting into his favorite attitude before the stove.

"You are quite right, professor," returned Koosje, curtly—she was sensible even in her trouble.

"And what is the trouble?" he asked, gently.

"It's just this, professor," cried Koosje, setting her arms akimbo and speaking in a high-pitched, shrill voice; "you and I have been warming a viper in our bosoms, and viper-like, she has turned round and bitten me."

"Is it Truide?"

"Truide," she affirmed disdainfully. Yes, it is Truide, who, but for me, would be dead now of hunger and cold—or *worse*. And she has been making love to that great fool, Jan van der Welde—great oaf that he is—after all I have done for her—after my dragging her in out of the cold and rain—after all I have taught her—ah, professor, but it is a vile, venomous, viper that we have been warming in our bosoms!"

"I must beg, Koosje," said the old gentleman sedately, "that you will exonerate me from any such proceeding. If you remember rightly, I was altogether against your plan for keeping her in the house." He could not resist giving her that little dig, kind of heart as he was.

"Serves me right for being so soft-hearted!" thundered Koosje. "I'll be wiser next time I fall over a bundle, and leave it where I find it."

"No, No, Koosje; don't say that," the old gentleman remonstrated gently. "After all, it may be but a blessing in disguise. God sends all our trials for some good and wise purpose. Our heaviest afflictions are often, nay, most times, Koosje, means to some great end, which, while the cloud of adversity hangs over us, we are unable to discern."

"Ah!" sniffed Koosje scornfully.

"This oaf—as I must say you justly term him, for you are

a good clever woman, Koosje, as I can testify after the experience of years—has proved that he can be false; he has shown that he can throw away substance for shadow, (for, of a truth, that poor, pretty child would make a sad wife for a poor man); yet it is better you should know it now than at some future date, when—when there might be other ties to make the knowledge more bitter to you."

"Yes, that is true," said Koosje, passing the back of her hand across her trembling lips. She could not shed tears over her trouble—her eyes were dry and burning, as if anger had scorched the blessed drops up ere they could fall. She went on washing up the cups and saucers, or at least *the* cup and saucer and other articles the professor had used for his tea; and after a few moment's silence he spoke again.

"What are you going to do? Punish her, or turn her out, or what?"

"I shall let him—*marry* her," replied Koosje, with a portentous nod.

The old gentleman couldn't help laughing. "You think he will pay off your old scores?"

"Before long," answered Koosje grimly, "she will find him out—as I have done."

"Then, having finished washing the tea-things which the professor had shuddered to behold in her angry hands, she whirled herself out of the room and left him alone.

"Oh, these women—these women!" he cried in confidence to the pictures and the skeletons. "What a worry they are! An old bachelor has the best of it in the main, I do believe. But oh, Jan van der Welde, what a donkey you must be to get yourself mixed up in such a broil! and yet—ah!"

The fossilized old gentleman broke off with a sigh as he recalled the memory of a certain dead and gone romance, which had happened—goodness only knows how many years before—when he, like Jan van der Welde, would have thrown the world away for a glance of a certain pair of blue eyes, at the bidding of a certain English tongue, whose broken *Nederlandsche taal* was to him the sweetest music ever heard on earth—sweeter even than the strains of the Stradivari, when from under his skillful fingers rose the perfect melodies of old masters. Ay, but the sweet eyes had been closed in death many a long, long year—the sweet voice hushed in

silence. He had watched the dear life ebb away—the fire in the blue eyes fade out. He had felt each day that the clasp of the little greeting fingers was less close; each day he had seen the outline of the face grow sharper; and at last there had come one when the poor little English woman met him with the gaze of one who knew him not, and babbled, not of green fields, but of horses and dogs, and of a brother Jack, who, five years before, had gone down with her Majesty's ship *Alligator*, in mid-Atlantic.

Ay, but that was many and many a year ago. His young blue-eyed love stood out alone in life's history, a thing apart. Of the gentler sex, in a general way, the old professor had not seen that which had raised it in his estimation to the level of the one woman over whose memory hung a bright halo of romance.

Fifteen years had passed away; the old professor of osteology had passed away with them, and in the large house on the Domplein lived a Baron, with half a dozen noisy, happy, healthy children—young Fraulas and Jonkheers—who scampered up and down the marble passages, and fell headlong down the steep, narrow unlighted stairways, to the eminent danger of dislocating their aristocratic little necks. There was a new race of neat maids, clad in the same neat livery of lilac and black, who scoured and cleaned, just as Koosje and Dortje had done in the old professor's day. You might, indeed, have heard the self-same names resounding through the echoing rooms, "Koos—je! Dort—je!"

But the Koosje and Dortje were not the same. What had become of Dortje I cannot say, but on the left-hand side of the busy, bustling, picturesque Oude Gracht, there was a handsome shop filled with all manner of cakes, sweeties, confections and liquors—from absinthe to Benedictine, or arrack to Chartreuse. In that shop was a handsome, prosperous, middle-aged woman, well-dressed and well-mannered, no longer Professor van Dijck's Koosje, but the Jevrouw van Kampen.

Yes; Koosje had come to be a prosperous tradeswoman of good position, respected by all. But she was Koosje van Kampen still—the romance which had come to so disastrous and abrupt an end had sufficed for her life. Many an offer had been made to her, it is true, but she had always declared

that she had had enough of lovers—she had found out their real value.

I must tell you that at the time of Jan's infidelity, after the first flush of rage was over, Koosje disdained to show any sign of grief or regret. She was very proud, this Netherlandish servantmaid, far too proud to let those by whom she was surrounded imagine she was wearing the willow for the faithless Jan; and when Dortje, on the day of the wedding, remarked that for her part she had always considered Koosje remarkably cool on the subject of matrimony, Koosje, with a careless out-turning of her hands, palms uppermost, answered that she was right.

Very soon after their marriage Jan and his young wife left Utrecht for Arnheim, where Jan had promise of higher wages, and thus they passed, as Koosje thought, completely out of her life.

"I don't wish to hear anything more about them, if—you—please," she said severely and emphatically to Dortje.

But not so. In time the Professor died, leaving Koosje the large legacy with which she set up the handsome shop in the Oude Gracht; and several years passed on.

It happened one day that Koosje was sitting in her shop sewing. In the large inner room a party of ladies and officers were eating cakes and drinking chocolates and liquors with a good deal of fun and laughter, when the door was opened timidly, thereby letting in a gust of bitter wind, and a woman crept fearfully in, followed by two small crying children.

Could the lady give her something to eat? she asked; they had had nothing during the day and the little ones were almost famished.

Koosje, who was very charitable, lifted a tray of large, plain buns, and was about to give her some, when her eyes fell upon the poor beggar's faded face, and she exclaimed:

"Truide!"

Truide, for it was she, looked up in startled surprise.

"I did not know or I would not have come in, Koosje," she said humbly, "for I treated you very badly."

"Ve—ry bad—ly," returned Koosje emphatically. "Then where is Jan?"

"Dead!" murmured Truide sadly.

"Dead! so—ah well! I suppose I must do something for

you. Here, Yanke!" opening the door and calling "Yanke!"

"Je, jevrouw," a voice cried in reply.

The next moment a maid came running into the shop.

"Take these people into the kitchen and give them something to eat. Put them by the stove whilst you prepare it. There is some soup and that smoked ham we had for *koffy*. Then come here and take my place for awhile."

"Je, jevrouw," said Yanke, disappearing again, followed by Truide and her children.

Then Koosje sat down again and began to think.

"I said," she mused presently, "*that* night that the next time I fell over a bundle I'd leave it where I found it. Ah well! I'm not a barbarian—I could't do that. I never thought, though, it would be Truide."

"Hi, jevrouw," was called from the inner room.

"Je mynheer," jumping up and going to her customers.

She attended to their wants and presently bowed them out.

"I never thought it would be Truide," she repeated to herself, as she closed the door behind the last of the gay uniforms and jingling scabbards. "And Jan is dead—ah well!"

Then she went into the kitchen where the miserable children—girls both of them, and pretty had they been clean and less forlornly clad—were playing about the stove.

"So Jan is dead," began Koosje, seating herself.

"Yes, Jan is dead," Truide answered.

"And he left you nothing!" Koosje asked.

"We had had nothing for a long time," Truide replied in her sad, crushed voice. "We didn't get on very well; he soon got tired of me."

"That was a weakness of his," remarked Koosje, dryly.

"We lost five little ones—one after another," Truide continued. "And Jan was fond of them, and somehow it seemed to sour him. As for me, I was sorry enough at the time, heaven knows, but it was as well. But Jan said it seemed as if a curse had fallen upon us; he began to wish you back again, and to blame me for having come between you. And then he took to *Genever*, and then to wish for something stronger, so at last every stiver went for absinthe, and once or twice he beat me, and then he died."

"Just as well," muttered Koosje, under her breath.

"It is very good of you to have fed and warmed us," Truide went on, in her faint, complaining tones. "Many a

one would have let me starve, and I should have deserved it. It is very good of you, and we are grateful; but 'tis time we were going, Koosje and Mina;" then added, with a shake of her head, "but I don't know where."

"Oh, you'd better stay," said Koosje, hurriedly. "I live in this big house by myself, and I dare say you'll be more useful in the shop than Yanke—if your tongue is as glib as it used to be, that is. You know some English, too, don't you?"

"A little," Truide answered, eagerly.

"And after all," Koosje said, philosophically shrugging her shoulders, "you saved me from the beatings, and the starvings and the rest. I owe you something for that. Why, if it hadn't been for you I should have been silly enough to have married him."

And then she went back to her shop, saying to herself:

"The professor said it was a blessing in disguise—God sends all our trials to work some great purpose. Yes: that was what he said, and he knew most things. Just think if I were trailing about now with those two little ones, with nothing to look back to but a schnaps-drinking husband who beat me. Ah, well—well! Things are best as they are. I don't know that I ought not to be very much obliged to her—and she'll be very useful in the shop."



THE HOUSE OF DEATH*

BY MAURUS JOKAI



It is a solitary, two-story house that I shall describe to the reader. Its exterior is plain and neat and the whitewashed walls, with their windows framed in green, give it an inviting aspect. In front of the house Italian firs are planted, and behind it stretches a spacious park, enclosed by an iron fence over which jasmine-bushes spread their exuberant growth of graceful vines. The open gate admits a glimpse into the courtyard, the centre of which is occupied by a belvedere offering a delightful view into the distance. And in this house no one is living.

On closer examination the building looks forsaken and repulsive. The window-panes are glittering in all the colors of the rainbow, the walls are crusted with mould; the flower-pots in the windows of the belvedere contain only withered cacti; the weeds are growing exuberantly in the flower-beds and the hinges of the doors are thickly covered with rust. Not a sound is audible. There is a tangle of trees and bushes, but no bird seeks shelter there to greet the dawning day with its morning song; no bee is visible to suck the honey from the flowers; not a cobweb in a corner is to be spied—all is silent and deserted. No one enters here, except Father Time, and even he does not seem to leave any traces behind.

In the rear of the garden, among the wild growth of shrubs, a hot spring is pouring forth its steaming water whose serpentine course is lined with poisonous plants.

Dotted round the house one can see scattered mounds, covered with grass, not unlike graves, and before some of them traces of rotting wooden crosses are discernible. It

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seems as if the house had only the mission to watch these graves.

On one of the walls is to be seen a black cross, which neither wind nor rain has been able to remove.

No one—nothing lives in this house.

Deserted ruins have their apparitions that rise from their unknown graves at midnight and drag their rattling chains behind; that flit through desolate ruins and frighten human beings with their unearthly aspect; but in this house there are no ghosts; there is only a frightful, unutterable terror present which creeps into the soul of the man who wanders through these empty, echoing halls, whose icy atmosphere not even midsummer can banish and through which a perennial, freezing breath of wind seems to sigh. Only Death can breathe as cold as that—yes, in this house only Death resides.

The hills around the house are graves. The house is accursed, and woe to him that becomes its guest! He will be the guest of Death.

Balthasar de Madocsay, who at one time owned this house, is known to this day through the unfortunate death he suffered. His horses shied in the woods, and, dragging him through thick and thin his limbs were torn asunder. His life had been as unfortunate as his death, and pitiable and helpless as his end.

He was rich. From his father, whom he had never known, he had inherited three estates, and he was not a year old when he lost his parents.

From his earliest childhood, he was gloomy and reserved as if he had already lived in a world in which his soul had imbibed an uncompromising bitterness. Never did he find one to love him. His comrades, when he appeared among them, drew back from him; never could he call anyone a friend, and as he never had a smile for any one, so no one ever smiled at him. Did nature make him that way? Or did someone curse him at his birth? Or was it the result of his education?

The view of his face was sufficient to stop the conversation of the jolliest company; a sigh, which sometimes escaped his breast could silence the merriest laughter and in his company every one felt depressed and ill-humored. His words

were cold and painfully trembling. No one dared to look in his eyes and when he spoke no one responded; he did not receive callers; women were terrified by his evil-boding look and drew timidly back from him.

He knew all that all very well.

There was something written on his brow; the hand of fate showed in the furrows on his forehead and this expression formed a barrier between him and the world.

If, among the mass, he sometimes met people who seemed less shy of him, he tried his best to attract them; he was overwhelming with his flattery and spent his treasures lavishly on them; for a kind word he unveiled the innermost troubles of his heart and he yearned to have some one call him friend—in vain!

When he had initiated some one into the most painful secrets of his heart and expected that one to sink on his breast and weep with him, there came from the lips of the hoped-for friend in a cold and distant tone: "*Tekintetes ur!*" (My lord!)

Sobbing, he once asked a young acquaintance, who was very poor, to shake hands with him and call him friend. The youth did so, but his face became as pallid on the instant as if he had shaken hands with the angel of death and had called him friend. Thenceforth he avoided Balthasar de Madocsay.

The young man's name was Albert Ajky.

With each succeeding day Balthasar retired more and more from the world until he shut himself entirely off from it, and, far from its social pleasures, lived all alone on one of his estates without ever receiving a visitor in his silent old castle.

Like all who tire of the world, he sought amusement in nature. He planted trees or gathered flowers, and the garden with its silent, green inhabitants formed his sole company. But a curse seemed to rest on everything he touched. Greedy caterpillars destroyed the blossoms of his fruit trees; unrestrainable rot attacked their trunks or the green fruit was stunted and poisoned by worms. Once he found with horror that all the flowers, which he had gathered with such assiduity and care, were poisonous plants.

His father had owned an old dog, and Balthasar fed him from his own table and let him sleep on soft pillows in his room; but, though he patted and caressed him most affec-

tionately, even his dog did not love him. He never acknowledged the kindness of his new master by a wagging of the tail; carefully and suspiciously he touched the food that was set before him; anxiously whining, with drooping tail, he would ask to be let out of the warm room and often, when refused, would wake his master from his sleep, with a pitiful, long-drawn howl.

So even the beasts felt the fateful charm which was woven about him.

Only two beings loved him: his oldest servant—a demented gardener and his grandchild, a girl of twelve years.

It is asserted, that he who is loved by children and lunatics, must suffer an awful death.

The girl's name was Judith. She was a beautiful child with black eyes, pale complexion and blonde, curly hair. She could recognize him from far off amidst a crowd of people; and then she would run to meet him, throw her little arms around his neck or press his hand to her heart, with her dainty



fingers. There was something bordering on insanity in the eccentric affection of this child who could stay for days, without eating or drinking, even without uttering a word in Balthasar's room, and who would cry for hours when she was taken away from there. This enthusiastic fondness affected the child to such a degree that she grew more pallid from day to day.

Her grandfather, the taciturn, insane old gardener, persecuted Balthasar since his earliest youth, with his senseless love. He never smiled, but as soon as he caught sight of him he roared with laughter until the tears rolled down his cheeks; sometimes he lay in wait for him and, when Balthasar passed, would clasp his arms around his knees with the strength of madness, kiss his feet and wail and moan piteously when dragged off. At first Balthasar was afraid of his weird and uncanny face; later, when he had entirely withdrawn from the world he became used to him and frequently conversed with and visited him in his little cottage. At such times the old man had lucid intervals; he spoke about the better days he had seen, when he was a happy man living in his own home, which was frequented by hosts of friends, and he had seen about him the happy, mirthful faces

of friends and relatives. All were dead now and buried deep in the ground.

Musingly Balthasar listened to the words of the old man and thought how lonesome he would be, should this man die.

Frequently, when walking in the garden, he noticed two shadows following him and, turning round, saw the grinning face of old Raba.

During the Summer nights the gardener slept under the windows of his master; in the colder season he sneaked into the ante-room and lay before his door in the cowering attitude of a faithful dog; sometimes his mania overcame him, and then he would attempt to enter his master's room to protect him against imaginary dangers.

From day to day Balthasar became more used to the old man's society until his presence, which everyone else avoided with terror, became a necessity to him. Whole days they spent together in a gloomy room that opened into the courtyard and was lighted, mostly, by the flickering flame of a log in the large fire place. They spoke about their forebodings which now, after long years, had begun to assume a frightful reality; they spoke about the mysteries of the "*Physica subterranea*," about the unlucky constellations which sadly influence the life of man; about the seventh-born over whose fate the mysterious number "7" exercised its baneful influence; about the enigmatical words whose very sound have force over fate and predestination and they conversed about those unfortunate creatures who, by a sinister, awe-inspiring being, are condemned to harm and destroy each other unavoidably.

On such occasions the two men put their heads together and the flickering flame illuminated two sorrowful faces. The yellowish-white hair of the lunatic fell in shaggy strands over his head, and his mysteriously whispering voice populated the little room with a host of spectres and apparitions. His eyes were always staring at one point and his hands rested on his knees, while Balthasar leaned silently back in his chair, listening with closed eyes and folded hands to the fantastic prophecies of the insane man. At that time Balthasar's forehead had become very high; he began to be bald.

And so there are men who are destined to destroy each other? Men, whom fate brings together in a most remarkable manner from the most distant corners of the earth to

execute an unavoidable judgment on them? And why should there be none such? Does not sometimes the most trivial circumstance—a word, a step, a wish at whose rise a good angel seems to warn one, decide a life? Perhaps Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo on account of a piece of cold roast. All the sufferings of this life fate sent us on account of a bite into an apple. . .

“Yes, yes,” murmured the lunatic, with feverish trembling. “Beware of a girl whose brow is snowy white and whose eyes are raven-black; that girl will kill you—you will mutually destroy each other. Both of you will die the same night, separated from each other, still each being the cause of the other’s death.”

These words he repeated so often and with such prophetic spirit, that at last Balthasar began to dream of a girl whose brow was very white, and whose eyes were lustrous, like two black diamonds. Such dreams scared him from his sleep, and long after he had opened his eyes the phantom stood before him in the darkness, only to reappear when he closed them again. Who could; who must that be? This thought tortured him unspeakably, together with the fantastic ramblings of the insane man. He became more despondent and dreamy. He could not find the rest at night which he missed during the day; idiosyncrasy took hold of his mind, which had been robbed of its equilibrium, until one could notice the signs of a quiet, gloomy insanity.



Late one moonlit evening Balthasar de Madocsay sat, as usual, in the small back room; opposite him was Raba, the insane gardener. They thought they were talking to each other, though both were silent. The lunatic sat cowering in his armchair, the upper part of his body resting on his knees and the moon reflecting her light from the large bald spot on his cranium which was supported by his hands.

Balthasar stared at the window, through which ever-changing objects in undefined outlines seemed to be visible, vanishing and reappearing, as the clouds hid and passed the moon. Suddenly it seemed as if a white, pallid face with

raven eyes had emerged and was intently staring at him. He fancied he was dreaming and moved his hands. His fingers touched the hot tiles of the fireplace and the pain made him conscious of the fact that he was awake.

"Look at the face! There! There!" he called out, jumping up and pointing at the window. But only the echo of his words was audible, and after it died away all was silent

again. "There it was," he called pantingly again and shook the arm of the old man, "look! look, there it was. It stared at me, but said nothing. Black eyes and white face. There! There! Don't you see?" And he shook the arm of the lunatic, who suddenly fell from his chair and lay

lifeless on the floor. He was dead. Noiselessly and quietly as he had lived, he died; no one had heard his last sigh.

Balthasar shuddered as the lifeless body slipped from the chair; the hands and head fell with a dull thud against the floor. The features looked woefully sad.

But more than the image of death that mysterious face tortured him. "Who can it be?" he asked himself, without finding an answer.

He could have found one, but his mind was not clear enough.

The wild thought that his fate was unavoidable, unreconcilable, had taken a safe hold of him and persecuted him. At last it became so torturing, so unbearable that he had to flee before himself. Next day he departed. He visited the largest and liveliest cities of the world and hurled himself into the giddy whirlpool of their noisiest pleasures.

His acquaintances, who interested themselves in the mystery of his fate, heard nothing of him for years.

Six years passed by while Madocsay, in this way, roamed through the world. He fled before his sinister thoughts, trying to find refuge in sensual pleasures and wild dissipation. And when he returned after six years of turbulent life he longed in his heart anew for all the gloomy presentiments which he had tried to eradicate; since the loathing of all enjoyments which had taken hold of him was more unbearable than all the tortures of his fate. He nowhere felt at home. For him everything was bitter, painful and an unextirpable



melancholy spread over his black thoughts. The only change which took place in him was that while he had formerly dreaded his fate, he now even did not believe in it. He neither hoped nor feared. When he smiled, it was a most sarcastic smile which bore an unspeakable, bitter expression when he wondered how he could have believed in that prophecy. For six years he had followed a thought which he dreaded most. Everywhere he sought the pale, black-eyed



women. He found many, but in none did he find his fate. They were, many of them, beautiful and charming, but evil-boding, there was none. At last he said to himself that only a lunatic could believe in the words of a lunatic, and a sort of confused restfulness seized his tired soul.

He returned again to his estates.

Most of his time was spent in the garden. There, in a gloomy arbor, formed by rankling vines of evergreen and Jericho roses, he dreamed whole days away. Frequently he was wetted by sudden showers, but what did he care, whose innermost soul was desolate and withered.

One day as he was lost in his reveries he caught sight, through the vines, of a female figure gathering flowers in the garden.

He was startled. The same eyes, the same face that had persecuted him so often. The same expression as in that night. "Again a vision," he said to himself, and closed his eyes. After a while he opened them once more.

The figure had come nearer—nearer; now she was close to the arbor, and as he plucked a rose from a twig several dry leaves fell on Balthasar's face.

"Who art thou, girl?" he called out, and forgetting himself, he broke through the green wall of the arbor.

The girl, in her surprise, dropped her apron, thereby emptying it of its contents, but the pale face did not color as she tremblingly stammered: "I am the grand-daughter of Raba."



Ah! Like a veil it fell from Balthasar's eyes. So this was the unknown phantom? How many of his doubts were now

solved at once! In this moment he became rejuvenated by ten years.

"How beautiful thou hast become, my dear little Judith!" he said, taking the hand of the pale maiden and, as he felt a slight pressure, he drew her into his arms and one could hear the rapid beating of his heart.

The young girl nestled to him with the same devotional love she had borne six years before.

Balthasar began to feel something new, a sort of sweet irritation in his heart; for the first time in his life he noticed how beautiful was the blue vault of heaven.

Arm in arm with the lovely maiden he walked among the flower beds of the garden, letting her tell him about the most uninteresting things in the world, listening attentively to the words which fell from her arched lips, believing all the while that the whole world was rotating around this charming mouth.

From this time on it seemed as if his whole being was changed, as if he had found the talisman that directed his fate into another channel; he detached himself entirely from his former being; he smiled and was constantly in good humor; he slept well, rose at an early hour, became talkative like other people, and spent whole days with the young girl in the gardener's cottage, where they amused themselves like two children whose thoughts are only directed to innocent play. It was a pleasure to see them together.

Once, as the lovely girl was playfully leaning against him, Balthasar drew her affectionately to his breast and, winding his arms around her graceful waist, looked deep into her eyes and asked, "Girl! dearest, sweetest girl! Couldst thou love me?"

The girl did not answer, but looked into his eyes with such an earnest and, at the same time, tender expression, that he could not bear it.

"Perhaps thou dost not understand me? See! I have no one to love me; neither hast thou! Come, be my wife, my sweet darling love!" Judith grew speechless, paled, and a shudder ran through her tender frame, while her arms fell listlessly to her sides.

Balthasar ascribed this change to maidenly bashfulness, and fixed the time for the fulfilment of his dearest wishes in the immediate future. The girl gave no response; but from

this time there was a timid reserve noticeable whenever Balthasar approached her. This he assigned to unknown psychological motives.

Only a week separated him from the happiest day of his life.

How many glorious plans he had made for that day! He had decided to live in the future still secluded from the rest of the world, seeking happiness only in his marital life. He did not know to whom to announce this happiness. His relatives had long forgotten him; acquaintances he did not have; friends he had never known. Then he remembered that he had a single friend, Albert Ajky, a poor youth, who might perhaps share with him the few moments which his happiness did not claim. He had someone search for the young man and invited him to the wedding.



Ajky arrived a few days before the appointed day and during this time the castle was filled with mirth and pleasure.

On the morrow of the happy day the voice of the lark, as well as the voice of love, awakened Balthasar. He dressed hurriedly and stole softly into the room of his lovely bride, who sat in a white morning-gown, pale and listless, at the window. As he entered she shot a dark glance at him. He approached, his heart filled with affection. "Judith, my dear, sweet love!" he whispered as he took her hand. But he dropped it suddenly—it was so icy—but icier yet was her voice:

"Tekintetes ur!"

The world seemed to turn rapidly around Balthasar; reeling he sank back on a chair and for a moment lost his breath. Ah, how inexorably these words persecuted him!

"*Tekintetes ur!*" said the girl, "when I was yet a child I felt a great attraction toward you, without knowing why? But an irresistible power compelled me to love you; in the moment, though, when you told me of your love, it seemed as if my soul had awakened from a long dream; I entered a new world and my vision became clear. No, I cannot deceive you; my conscience does not permit it; I have to confess—" There the girl stopped, as if expecting to be interrupted.

Madocsay remained silent; not even his breath was audible.

For a moment Judith stood, undecided and hesitating, before him, until, with sudden determination, she said: "I love another man," and, turning aside, she raised her hands to her face and broke into tears.

Madocsay gnashed his teeth and the arteries of his temples swelled almost to bursting, but his eyes remained closed and the face unmoved.

For a long while he was silent; then, suppressing his bitterness, he asked in a low and forced voice: "Whom dost thou love?"



Tremblingly, almost in a whisper, the answer came over Judith's lips: "Albert!"

No sigh, no movement betrayed the commotion in Balthasar's soul. "Well," was all he said, and with this he quietly left the room.

Instead of a wedding there was a betrothal celebrated on that day in Castle Madocsay, and the feast passed off in the same jolly way as if Balthasar, and not Mr. Albert Ajky, had been the happy groom.

Madocsay kept the young couple as guests in the castle until the day of their wedding, and he took it upon himself to provide them with a handsome dowry. It was then that he built the house, described at the beginning of this story, and deeded it as a gift to Ajky. The work on it was pressed to such a degree that torchlights were used at night to hasten its completion. After two months the house was ready and furnished for occupancy.

Now Albert and Judith's wedding was celebrated. A magnificent feast was spread in Castle Madocsay, and Balthasar himself was the jolliest of all, though a black shadow lurked beneath his mirth, which probably was the cause that, when he rose to drink the health of the bride, the glass slipped from his hand and he sank back fainting in his chair.



In the evening all got into carriages and Balthasar himself drove the young couple to their house. There he blessed them, kissed his friend, and then they were left to themselves.

Driving home through the woods in the dark night, Balthasar's horses shied, broke away, and dragging him over rocks and against the trunks of trees, his horribly mutilated body was found next morning before the gate of the castle. The horrified servants at once dispatched a messenger with the evil tidings to Albert. It was about noon when the messenger arrived at the new house. The gate was still locked.

"Are they sleeping yet?" the messenger asked himself. After ringing the bell and knocking at the gate for a long while he climbed over the fence to awaken the sleepers. He first went into the servants' wing, where he found two men sleeping. He called and shook them but they did not wake. Both were dead. Terribly frightened, the messenger tried to alarm the other inhabitants, but no answer, except the dull echo, followed his loud calls. Overcome with fear, he hurried home, and bringing his comrades along, they returned to the silent house. Breaking in the doors which led to the rooms of the young couple, they found in the ante-room, near the window, the dead chambermaid with distorted features, as if she had been strangled. She had evidently tried to open the window, but death had reached her before she succeeded in the attempt. Then they forced the bedroom open. There, behind the curtains of the bridal couch, lay groom and bride, pale, with eyes closed and hearts stilled in death. In a cage on the wall were three canary birds, also dead. Even the flies had dropped from the walls. All living beings had died in the house that night, and none was left to tell the story of what had happened.

From this time the new house remained desolate and forsaken. The dead were buried before the gate as a warning sign not to enter. If, nevertheless, some bold man attempted to ferret out the mystery of the house, he invariably was found dead next morning in one of the rooms.

At last the place got in such bad repute that even homeless vagabonds, in the severest Winter, did not dare to seek shelter under its roof; and if it happened that some criminal took refuge there, he never left his shelter again; he found a grave among the rest.

Only one of those who took refuge there escaped. He was a daring incendiary who sought to escape his pursuers, and who, when he felt the strangling pressure of the hand of death, jumped determinedly from a window of the second

story. Being questioned, he related terrible things about slowly creeping pains, which stupefy the brain and forcibly close the eyes of man.

It was this man who painted the black cross on the wall of the house.

On examination it was found that the house was built over a hot spring, whose suffocating vapors penetrate the walls and kill all life inside its closed doors and windows.

Not in vain had Balthasar de Madocsay studied the "*Physica Subterranea*."



THE MATE TO MY CAMEO*

BY F. A. MITCHEL

I had strolled into the park to pass time that hung heavy on my hands. On the morrow I was to take part in what was, at least to me, and one other, an important affair; and nothing is more trying than waiting for a crisis. I was a student at a German university. Not a German student or an English student—an American. I sat idly tapping my boot with my stick; before me the lake, the boats skimming its surface, the pagoda, carriages passing and repassing; all flashing in the sunlight.

On a grass plot not far from where I lounged, a couple of French *bonnes* were gossiping, while the children they watched chased each other over the green sward. I could occasionally catch words as the little ones shouted to each other, and I knew they were English—at least they spoke the English tongue. One of them, a little girl of perhaps six or seven years, had dashed by me several times with flying ringlets. In her sash was that which plainly showed she had disregarded the instructions posted everywhere: "*Es ist nicht erlaubt Blumen abzupflücken.*" "It is not permitted to pluck the flowers." In one of her flights I stopped her.

"Don't you see," I said pointing with my stick to one of these notices; "they won't let anyone pick the flowers?"

She looked from me to the notice, then at her flowers; then fixed her eyes straight on mine. But her mind was not easily made up to such an informal introduction, and she soon dropped her eyes again to the flowers.

"Suppose a policeman should come along," I went on, "and find these flowers in your girdle?"

Her brow knit in a frown, but still she did not deign to answer.

"Never mind; I'll try to get him to let you off, if he comes."

"But if you can't?" said a little voice. It was so little and so timid that I scarcely heard it.

*The story of a love that lasted. From Belford's Monthly.

"I can try. Won't you give me one of the flowers?"

In a twinkling she forgot her fears. A new question came up to drive the first right out of her little brain. She began to pick over the flowers, hunting for one worthy of a gift.

On the roadway at the foot of the slope one of the guardians of the park was loitering in the sun, his hands clasped behind him, his sabre swinging like the pendulum of a clock as he walked with his head thrown back, that he might see from under his helmet. He would move to the extremity of his beat, stop and look a while at the picture of park scenery before him, then turn and walk idly back. His eyes were evidently on the maids with the group of children. Presently, instead of stopping when he came to the end of his beat, he kept on and around a curve in the road, disappearing for a few moments behind a clump of trees.

"The policeman!" I exclaimed to the child. "He's coming."

"Where?" Her cheek whitening.

"Down there behind the trees."

She looked anxiously in the direction I pointed.

"Give me the flowers," I said. "He'll think I took them."

"No."

"Yes, quick."

"No, no," she cried, impatiently stamping her diminutive foot.

"Why not?"

"You didn't take them."

"Well, come and sit by me. I won't let him hurt you."

She came and climbed upon the seat beside me. The policeman came on, professedly looking at the flower-beds or the trees, or up at the sky, but really at the maids. As he came near where we were sitting, I could hear my protégée's little heart beating like a toy drumstick. When he came opposite us, what was my astonishment to see her take the flowers from her girdle and hold them toward him, and call out:

"I took your flowers, Mr. P'liceman. Are you going to take me to prison?"

Fortunately she spoke in English, and not till a moment after he had passed. He kept on without noticing us, around the road which bent in an ellipse about the sward. Then my little girl buried her face against my shoulder and burst into tears.

This conflict between physical timidity and moral strength was a novelty to me. My only idea of courage thus far was that which is attended by brute force. There was something to me very touching in the child's conquest of herself; her subjection of her fear of punishment to her sense of right. For a few minutes, to a passer-by there would have been presented the singular spectacle of a young man with sprouting beard, in tasselled high top-boots, a tight-fitting jacket and a student's cap, playing the uncouth part of masculine nurse in comforting a child.

"Never mind, little one; he shouldn't have troubled you; I'd have spitted him on his own steel first."

In another moment there was a transition. Undried tears stood on her cheek, but every other vestige of distress had disappeared. She stepped down off the seat.

"Are you going to leave me?" I asked.

"Yes."

"So soon?"

"Maybe I'll come back again if——"

"If the policeman comes, you little coward—no, you little heroine. Won't you give me a kiss before you go?"

She looked down on the walk, neither assenting to or dissenting from my proposition. I drew her toward me, and taking her head between my two hands, looked into her face. There was a strange contrast in the picture of innocence before me and the picture of another kind which thrust its ugliness upon my mind—a picture of the day before.

I had quarrelled with my chum, an Englishman. The quarrel arose from nothing. "All progressive thought," I said, "emanates from Germany."

"From England," he supplemented.

"Germans are full of idéalism,—poetry—romance."

"And cheese and beer; Englishmen can write much better stuff," he sneered.

"And fill themselves much fuller with beef and porter."

"And an American can get his heels higher."

"You are full of English arrogance and conceit." I was becoming angry.

"And you are full of American assurance," he retorted.

"English, cowardly brut—"

He stopped me. His manner, which had been cool,

changed, but to a steadier vein even than before. "Only a coward would use such words to a friend."

His words and his steadiness threw me into a passion. I was very quick, or I couldn't have done what I did. I sent him sprawling on the floor. Several students heard the noise and rushed in. For a moment they stood staring near the door, then came and raised him.

But I am gazing into the face of innocence. The curves are so beautiful, so delicate, blending the cheek into the fullness of the throat. The thin nostril, the sensitive lip, the ear tinged with vermillion. I smoothed back the tresses of fine hair.

Presently she asked: "Have you got a girl?"

"No, I haven't a girl."

"Have you got a boy?"

"Nor a boy."

"Haven't you got any children at all?"

"Not one. And I haven't father or mother."

She pitied me.

"Brothers?"

"No brothers."

"Sisters?"

"Not one."

"I don't like that."

Her big blue eyes were full of sympathy. I wound my arm about her. How frail the lithe figure felt in my strong clasp!

"Deedie!" called one of the maids.

"I must go now. Émilie is calling me."

"Go and ask Émilie if you may come back and stay with me a little longer?"

"Will you wait here till I come?"

"Certainly."

I leaned back on the wooden settee and watched an animated conversation between the *bonne* and the child, the former throwing occasional suspicious glances in my direction. The tiny pleader argued briskly. She bent her little face near to that of the maid, and snapped her eyes and made excited little gestures, speaking so fast (from what I could hear, in French) that she must have quite confounded her guardian; for presently she came running back all out of breath, with the information that she might stay a little longer.

I sat for some time trying to keep her with me, for at sight of a butterfly or a humming-bird she would be off like the wind. When she came back from one of these flights I drew her to me to caress her. I wound her curls around my fingers; I smoothed the tumbled hair from the forehead. I made excuses to turn her pliable figure this way and that way, that I might grasp the soft arms or play with the tiny fingers. I asked her about a bead necklace she wore, and who gave it to her; and took hold of it to examine it, that my hand might touch her warm neck. And all the time she prattled, and asked me questions, and told me about people whose identity she didn't trouble herself to explain, as though I had always known them.

"What a funny cap!" She reached up and took the diminutive covering worn by students in Germany from my head, and putting it on her own, broke away, and capered about like a little witch. Then she came back and put the cap on my head, and when I tilted it on one side she objected, and insisted on my wearing it straight.

"Do you live here always?" she asked.

"No. When I'm at home I live where the sun gets up in the morning long after it does here. When you are eating your breakfast it is dark there."

Her eyes were full of wonder. "Where is that country?"

"America."

"Why we live in America."

"Indeed?"

"It isn't dark there when we eat our brakfast."

I laughed. Why trouble myself to explain. She would not understand. I asked her how she would like to go back with me. She thought a moment.

"I'd go anywhere to be with you."

I was forgetting everything in this confidence, this innocence, this diminutive combination of strength and weakness. She insisted on decorating me with the flowers she had appropriated, and soon made me look like a figure in a flower-bed—"a Hector in the garden." Then she stood off and looked at me, and clapped her hands in great glee and laughed, and I laughed myself.

"Deedie!"

"Your nurse is calling you again; you must go."

"Are you coming here to-morrow?" she asked.

The question startled me. It brought me back to my quarrel. Where might I be to-morrow?

"Do you wish me to come?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Very much?"

"Ever so much."

An expression of pain must have passed over my face, for she asked:

"Why do you look sorry?"

"Go. But stay a moment. What can I give you for a keepsake?" I felt in my vest-pocket for some trinket, but could find nothing. "Here." I pulled a cameo sleeve-button from my cuff and handed it to her.

She drew back. "Mamma won't let me take things from people."

"Take it, and if your mamma won't let you keep it, you can bring it back to me another day."

"To-morrow?"

"Go! go! good-bye."

I wound my arms about her and kissed her. When I opened them it was like letting a bird out of a cage. She flew like a swallow near the ground, across the grass, to re-join the nurses and the other children.

Then they all arose and walked away. Each nurse dragged a child smaller than the rest by the hand, while the other children danced along, skipping backward and forward, taking many a useless step, the boys pounding one another with chubby fists, the girls stopping to gather clover leaves, all moving together, gilded by the rays of the setting sun.

And my little friend! Every step she took was a step of grace; every swing of her arms and bending of her body, a curve of beauty. She ran, and skipped, dancing along backward, half the time on her toes, as if too light to stay on the ground, holding up her keepsake for me to see, and throwing me kisses, first with one hand and then the other. As she passed over a strip of higher ground her form stood out against the sky. She turned for the last time to wave me a good-bye. The sun's rays were flooding her: they rested on her shoulder; they kissed her cheek; they revelled in her tresses. For a moment her figure seemed to hover on the crest, and then was gone; not descending with the slope on the other side, but vanishing into the violet sky.

Four weeks elapsed before I went into the park again. Then my complexion was many shades whiter, and two stout canes lay beside me on the seat on which I rested, the same on which I sat when I made the acquaintance of Deedie. I was convalescent. I had taken part in what I feel that I speak assuredly in saying it was my last *affaire d'honneur*. I had been severely wounded.

It was now midsummer, and I was glad to be protected from the sun by an elm which spread its branches near me. I had come to the park with a vain hope of meeting my friend—my little girl who had so charmed me by her innocent prattle and, more than all, by her childish exhibition of moral courage. While I sat I meditated on my parting with her a month before—the disappointment she must have experienced when she came to the park the next day and did not find me.

The next day! What had it brought for me?

Just before dawn of that eventful morning I lay dreaming—dreaming that I walked in the park with Deedie—yet not Deedie the child; she had grown to be a woman. The park, too, had changed. The trees had grown wonderfully; saplings which the day before had only reached to my head were now twice as high. And Deedie—she was not the little romp of yesterday, but wore a countenance of deep seriousness—she walked beside me calmly and with a certain awe-inspiring stateliness. Her features retained all the delicacy of a child, but added the sympathy of a woman. And I thought she said to me, “Would you kill him because you insulted him? because you struck him?”

“Was it my fault?”

“Yes.”

“What would you have me do?”

“Ask his pardon.”

“And be considered what I called him—a coward?”

“Yes.”

“Why do you say that?” I was troubled.

“Because if you do not you will *be* what you called him.”

“Deedie!”

I felt a vise-like grip on my arm and found myself awakened. A strapping youngster about my own age, with a box under his arm, was visible in the glimmer of early dawn.

“Never mind the girl,” he said; “get up.”

"What girl?"

"The one you've been calling in your sleep. Your girl is locked up for the present."

The laugh that accompanied his words jarred upon me, scarcely awakened from my vivid dream.

"Where?" I asked, bewildered.

"In here;" and he tapped with his finger on the box.

"Yes, yes, I see."

I threw off the covering and sprang up.

There is the policeman walking on the same beat, his sabre swinging, his head thrown back. But where is the child? I scan the different groups near me. No. She isn't here. I should know her among a thousand children.

But that eventful morning. We two, my friend and myself, walked briskly along a road. It was daylight, though the sun was not yet up. The country smelled fresh and sweet. The birds were about preparing breakfast for their young; chirping loudly, and somewhat discordantly, it seemed to me, in my peculiar state of mind. A cartman came driving along the road in his cart, which was loaded with cabbages. He saw the box under my friend's arm, and eyed us suspiciously. With the instinct of one living near a German university town, he scented the truth.

"So! my young gentlemen," he called to us as he passed; "this is no padded, masked work. This is the real thing?"

"We are going a-fishing," said my friend.

"A-hunting, rather," said the huckster, with a grin.

We hurried on. It was getting late. I could not divest myself of the feeling that beside me walked a figure. Whether I walked fast, or whether I walked slow, it kept pace with me, ever turning upon me a pair of blue eyes, and kept saying: "Would you kill him because you insulted him? because you struck him?"

Would I kill him? I was an excellent shot; he was a bungler. I had tried to make him a better, but he was too clumsy. He could handle neither a foil nor a pistol, and hadn't the delicacy of sight or touch to learn.

Suddenly we turned aside into a wood.

"In here," said the young athlete who guided me, vaulting a fence.

I followed him, and we passed through a thicket and out into an open space on the bank of a river. There stood my friend of the day before, now my enemy, with his tawny English beard, fresh complexion, and blue eyes. Beside him stood a companion and a medical student, the latter looking very important, with his arms folded, and his short, high-shouldered body perched on a pair of long, thin legs. He was staring through his glasses at us.

I cast a glance at my adversary's face. He was calm and resolute. I saw as plainly as words could have told me the condition of his mind. Besides, I knew him well. His nature was eminently practical. He was the most stolid, matter-of-fact man I ever knew, yet honest and steadfast at heart. He had determined that he must kill me, or I would kill him; and he had decided to kill me if he could.

We were not on the field ten minutes. The distance was paced. I was handed my pistol and sent to my station. The word was given.

But other words sounded in my ears with the signal fire—the words spoken to me by Deedie in my dream.

Both shots rang out as one, sharp and spiteful on the quiet morning air. I purposely fired aside from the living mark before me. My adversary stood unhurt; I had a bullet in my side.

I saw a figure striding toward me. It looked strange and tall, and indistinct, but I knew it was my adversary.

"Are you satisfied?" I asked.

"Satisfied! good God, are you badly hurt?"

"It was all my fault." I extended my hand. He attempted to take it, but the seconds interfered. "We haven't time for palaver; we must get away from here at once." A carriage in which the medical student had come to the ground stood in the road near by. I was hurried into it, or rather carried, for I was fainting. The doctor and my second got in with me, and we drove to my rooms. The others hurried off in a different direction.

All that morning I lay on my bed, experiencing a mental, if not a physical, convalescence. I had been badly wounded, but this was nothing. My hot head had been turned into gentler veins of thought. I had been saved a bitter memory, a fiend that would have pursued me through life. I was in an ecstasy when I realized that I had not killed my friend—

that my hands were bloodless. I was thinking of the diminutive shield which had been thrust between me and crime—the little maid I had met in the park. My whole being was filled with gratitude and love for her. She is perhaps seven, I mused; I am twenty. Seven from twenty leaves thirteen. When she is twenty I shall be thirty-three. That's not a great difference. Then I made a vow—a reckless, absurd, boyish vow. Ah! the hot impulse of youth; into what follies does it lead us?

One of my first acts on getting out was to take my remaining sleeve-button to a jeweler and have a pin attached, that I might wear it in my scarf. Perhaps she will do the same, I argued; and I have an abiding faith that by this means we shall one day recognize each other. There was another link by which I might know her: Deedie I learned was the diminutive for Delia; so Delia must be her Christian name.

I sat in the park till sunset. I saw again in fancy the group of a month before passing over the crest, the children racing, and Deedie dancing backward, holding up her token and throwing me kisses. Then the figure melted from my fancy as it had faded from my eyes before. I arose and walked away. For the first time in my life I experienced a sensation of loneliness.

After that, on bright days I often visited the park, but not to find my little love. Doubtless she had returned to America. At last I completed my studies and left the university.

Twelve years passed, during which, if my child friend did not pass entirely out of my mind, she at least became a very indistinct image on my memory. I had become a quiet, mature citizen of the United States, with no fancy whatever for the sight of blood, and without the slightest predilection for making vows. The one I had made so long before I was not disposed to regard as strictly binding; and, should any reason occur for its breaking, I did not look upon it as a serious obstacle.

I was sitting one summer afternoon on the porch of an hotel facing one of the New England beaches, chatting with a friend—a lady. The porch ran nearly around the hotel. It was the hour when the young lady sojourners, dressed in tasteful costumes, promenaded, sometimes three or four abreast, back and forth; quite enough of them, I thought, to

form a battalion of beauty. Suddenly, in one of the platoons that tramped by, appeared one who, as she passed, nodded pleasantly to the lady with whom I was sitting. The salutation was unstudied, yet not familiar—a happy combination of cordiality and dignity. The smile that accompanied it sent a thrill through me in a twinkling.

“Who is that?” I inquired quickly.

“Miss Ward.”

“Her Christian name?”

“Edith.”

“No, no; her other name?”

“She has no other.”

“Isn’t it Delia?”

“Simply Edith. Would you like to know her?”

I rested back in the chair, from which I had started.

“Thank you; I’ll not trouble you. I shall not be here long.”

The next afternoon I was standing on the porch with my friend, taking my leave. A bevy of young girls approached, and one of them, wishing to speak with my friend, stopped for the purpose. In a twinkling I was introduced to the whole party. One of the young ladies was Miss Ward.

There was about this girl a certain high-born reserve which alternated with an engaging frankness and sprightliness. There were two sides to her disposition, the one merry, the other serious. A low, melodious laugh expressed keen enjoyment to perfection; but if anything occurred to divert her from merriment to seriousness, there came without warning that which never failed to inspire me with a kind of awe.

Instead of departing at once, as I intended, I did not leave the hotel for four weeks. I prolonged my stay notwithstanding a number of resolutions to the contrary, until I began to censure myself for being weak. At last, perceiving that my stay was noticed by my friends, I resolved to leave immediately.

On the evening on which I made this new—and I determined it should prove an irrevocable—resolution I chanced to be sitting on the portico with—Miss Ward. The moon was at the full, and came out of the ocean as the sun set. It seemed singular to me now that I should have presumed to speak so confidently to one I had known so short a time. Besides, my companion had not encouraged any special confi-

dence on my part. Indeed, I regretted that she had ceased to treat me with the unconventionality of the others, and seemed at times a trifle constrained. What it was that led me to confide in her on the evening mentioned I can scarcely conceive, unless it was that exquisite hour, the most delightful to me of all hours of the day, when the newly-risen full moon stands on the horizon as if pausing to survey the landscape, and then begins to rise, a great illuminated ball, in the heavens.

Whatever was the cause, I touched upon several episodes in my life, among them the story of my meeting little Delia in the park in Germany, twelve years before. I gave a minute account of what occurred: the child's appropriation of the park flowers, the approach of the policeman, the honest confession. When I came to speak of her departure, "Here," I said, putting my finger on my scarf-pin, "is the mate to a keepsake I gave her."

"What a beautiful cameo!" she looked at it closely. "I think I have noticed it in your scarf before."

I took it from its place and handed it to her. She bent over it to examine the carving in the mingling twilight and moonlight.

"You haven't told me," she said, without looking up, "what it was that engaged your attention on the day after you parted with the little girl."

I hesitated. "That would scarcely interest a woman."

"But I wish to know."

I told her of my quarrel with my English friend; my dream before going out to the field; my firing aside, and receiving my adversary's bullet. As I gave the short story she bent closer to the object she was examining, lower and lower, as the twilight deepened, until her face was entirely hidden from me. When I had finished, we sat some time in silence.

"This pin," she remarked at last, "must have been cut at Rome."

"It was."

"I thought so. They cut them beautifully there."

"Were you ever in Rome?"

"And the child—" she went on, without heeding my question, "she really prevented your becoming a—murderer?"

"Would you have so regarded me?" I looked at her anx-

iously. Indeed there was that in her manner, as well as her words, which made me tremble.

"Yes, and more;" she raised her eyes and fixed them full upon mine; "a coward."

Great heavens! how like the look on the face of Delia, in my dream of years before.

"And you have given up all expectation of ever seeing the child again?" she asked, turning her eyes from me to the cameo.

"I scarcely know if I should wish to meet her."

"Why?"

"Under an impulse of gratitude for the unknowing part she had taken in preventing my being a—murderer——"

"And a coward," she interrupted.

"And a coward," I admitted, "I made a silly sentimental vow."

"What vow?" she frowned.

"That no other person should be my wife; that I would seek her, and when found, if ever, I would win her——"

"Supposing that she would be willing," she added, not giving me time to finish. It was plain that I had antagonized her.

"Of course."

"Well?"

"Since then,"—I looked out at the peaceful moon, at the deepening shadows, the gilded face of the rocks,—“since then, I have met one who has driven the child-image from my mind—I fear from my heart.”

We sat without speaking, each waiting for the other to break the silence.

"You have spoiled a pretty story," she said. "You should have been true to the little girl. How do you know but that she is treasuring the mate to your pin?"

"She was too young."

"How old did you say?"

"Seven, perhaps."

"Seven! That's not too young; I was impressed myself at that age."

"May I ask, are you true to that impression?"

She hesitated. "I have treasured an ideal. But I must go in," she added, in another moment; and rising, she moved toward a window opening onto the porch from the drawing-room.

"Good-night."

She stepped in at the window. As she crossed the sill and entered the brilliantly lighted room she turned. A smile, a frank, happy smile broke over her face. It bespoke the merry side of her disposition; a certain witchery that, seen between moonlight and gaslight, made me wonder for a moment if she were not a veritable witch. In another moment she was gone.

That night I dreamed. I was again in the park in Germany. It was night, the "*humida nox*" of Virgil, a night suggestive of cypress, of exuberant verdure, of hanging bough and twisting vine, all seen by the light of a waning moon. The image of a former dream walked beside me. The features of that image had long ago faded from my memory. Now they were the features of Miss Ward.

"Would you kill him because you insulted him? because you struck him?" The words came strangely, as out of a dead past.

"No, no; I will kill no one. I am no longer a boy. I thank God I escaped the dreadful result of that boyish folly. It was you who taught me what is true courage; teach me now what is love."

My dream haunted me all the next day. I sat on a rock against which the waves beat sluggishly. There was something in the slow surging, the broad stretch of ocean view, the clouds changing their fantastic shapes, that especially accorded with the condition of my mind. My meeting when a youth with the little girl in Germany, the transition from a state of mind wherein I considered the taking of a human life quite an exhilarating affair, to one a day later, wherein I was willing to risk my own life rather than defend it from my antagonist, began to seem strange to me. Then my vow—it had suddenly become a menace. All these matters kept passing and repassing while I listened to the ever splashing waves.

That evening I met Miss Ward again. I expected it would be my last evening at the sea-shore that summer. We sat in the nook where we had sat together so often before. Whether it was the prospect of my departure, or a suddenly imparted knowledge of the condition of my feelings, I do not know to this day, but the spell that had been gathering about me for weeks appeared suddenly intensified. Without

intention, without forethought, led on, it seemed, by a sort of fatality, I suddenly burst into a torrent of words which I had never dreamed of speaking when I joined her. I poured out my feelings in a number of short, glowing sentences—sentences I never could have spoken had I prepared to speak them.

I well remember her first words after I had ceased to speak. They conveyed to me the first knowledge of how deeply I was stung.

"But your vow?" she said. I started. I had forgotten it. "Do you think it would be right for you to break it?"

I was silent.

"You must keep it."

Something told me that, however I might regard its keeping or its breaking, there was no compromise to be hoped for from the only woman who would be a temptation for me to break it.

She had been toying with my cameo, which she had desired to examine again, and which seemed to have a curious charm for her. As she spoke the last words she arose and handed it back to me. I interpreted the act to mean a parting.

"I cannot. I will not," I cried, passionately.

"You can and you will," she replied. There was a bright spark in her eye. The other features of her face indicated only sympathy, kindness.

"Good-bye," I faltered.

"Rather say adieu," she said, softly. She took my hand and pressed it kindly so kindly that it almost seemed that her regret was not entirely on my account. "I shall have a word to say to you before you go," she added. "May I see you here to-morrow evening, when the moon rises?"

"Better go at once," I replied, bitterly.

"Shall I see you?" she repeated.

I bowed a silent assent.

The interval between this parting and the next evening, on which I was to be accorded one more interview, seemed interminable. I believed her decision to be irrevocable; but what lover will not hope so long as there is desire? Still, I wished it all over, and I steaming on a train—anywhere to get away from her who I had suddenly discovered was to embitter my life. As the hour of our meeting approached

I paced the porch, walking, chafing, waiting for—the moon. I had consulted the almanac and set my watch carefully. Nevertheless, it seemed on this evening that all astronomical calculations were in error. The time would not go, or so slowly that whenever I examined my timepiece the hands seemed scarcely to have moved. At last there was a brightening of the heavens, but ah, how slow! It gathered and deepened and grew until, far out on the dark ocean, a tiny wave leaping higher than its fellows caught a spark of gilt. Soon others were touched by the the gilding rays, and at last a broken stream of light shot from the rising orb to the shore. When it stood full out on the horizon I heard a step behind me. I turned. It was Edith Ward.

She was clad in the light drapery of midsummer. The moonlight fell on her advancing figure, softening the gauzy folds of her dress and blending them with the environing shadow. She was to me a human apparition; substantial yet unsubstantial, spiritual loveliness in human beauty. Why was she not less beautiful or less conscientious?

As she approached, my eye was caught by a flash of something, evidently metallic, where a lace handkerchief crossed her bosom. I was led by some unaccountable attraction to fasten my gaze on this object, which I knew I had never seen before, and which, as she drew nearer, shaped itself more distinctly. In another moment it flashed upon me what it was.

And what was it? To this day the answer brings a thrill of pleasure, causes my blood to quicken, my pulse to throb faster. What was it? A trinket, a bit of gold and stone, a souvenir. It was the mate to my cameo.

I sprang across the short distance that separated us.

"And you are Delia?"

"No, Edith."

"Then how did you come by that cameo?"

"You gave it to me."

"And the name Delia?—explain."

"That was my father's doing. It was first Edie. Papa corrupted it to Deedie."

A single letter had misled me for twelve years.

"And you have kept my souvenir?"

"I was forbidden to do so. I went to the park the day after I met you to return it. You were not there."

"No, I was not there. And you remember me?"

"I have not entirely forgotten," she said, dropping her eyes, "though I was pretty young to——"

She did not finish.

"Love?" I asked, trembling.

There was an expression of earnestness in her face which, mellowed by the moonlight, I can liken to nothing else than that of a divine messenger from another sphere. And she said, looking straight out on the ocean and speaking as one in a dream:

"Would you kill him because you insulted him? because you struck him?"

A kind of awe swept over me. There was something in her appearance so far beyond mortality, something so typical of a reverse to that descent into the accursed region of remorse which had once threatened me.

"Edith! Edith!" I cried, the words of the night before bursting involuntarily from my lips, "I will kill no one. I am no longer a boy. Thank God, I escaped the dreadful result of that boyish folly. It was you who prevented, you who taught me what is true courage; teach me now what is love."

"And you have repented that you ever thought of taking a life—the life of a friend?"

"Repented? yes, often, now, forever."

She stood silent a moment and then said softly, "Then keep your vow."

A smile broke through her seriousness. In a twinkling she was the little witch who, twelve years before, had decorated me with flowers.

I have a little daughter seven years old, with blue eyes. My wife and I are continually wrangling about the name, since I call her Deedie and my wife calls her Edie. Her mother says that the child shall remain in America; that children should not be allowed to play in public parks to make promiscuous acquaintances, especially of reckless young men who have no higher ambition than to cut and slash and shoot one another at the slightest provocation. I do not object to my wife guiding her daughter, but I do object to her referring to me indirectly as a promiscuous acquaintance.

THE OMELET*

BY GUSTAVE DROZ

The rain, which had been falling since morning, seemed to have tired itself out; it had become so fine that it was like the light mists that hang over the fields of an evening. We had just dined; Baby, who had fallen asleep during dessert, had been taken up-stairs, and Louise and I, standing at the open window, were singing as we looked out over the horizon.

"Suppose we leave the ark, Papa Noah," said my wife to me.

"But I see no rainbow, dear."

"All the more reason, we'll go and meet it."

She went away, and soon returned, hooded, booted, gloved. She took my arm very firmly, really leaning on it, pressing against me as one does on the happy days of meeting, after a long absence.

"Oh, how glad I am to get out! Do you feel how sweet the air is? I would like to walk for miles. Supposing we go a long way, it is still broad daylight."

And she gave me a laughing push as she spoke, and took long strides to regulate her steps to mine.

We skirted the hedge, and, turning to the left, entered the wood. We loved it so, our dear wood. It was silent at this hour, damp and soaked. The moss, swollen with water, yielded under the foot like a squeezed sponge, and on every leaf of the overweighted branches hung a transparent drop just ready to fall.

"You will get very wet, darling," I said to Louise, stopping short.

"Never mind, I have on my thick boots; let us go on, anyhow."

And we pursued our way through the wood, which dripped silently, like the beard of a sea-god.

I was grateful to my wife for being so brave that evening, for there is nothing in the world as lovely as the damp forest,

*A woodland idyl translated from the French, by S. St. G. Lawrence, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

particularly at the hour when everything is settling into silence and rest, when the weary rain goes back into its clouds, when the birds themselves begin to fall asleep and think of getting dry; I loved it all, for it is very sweet, when there are just two of you, and her hand is on your arm, to feel yourselves quite alone, and to walk on under the high green arches; to breathe the penetrating odor of the damp woods, to strike your cane against the great trunks of the oaks, which give back a long, full sound that all the other trunks repeat in turn; to stop short at the noise of a snapping twig, at the murmur of the water-drops which whisper now and then as they fall from leaf to leaf; to breathe into your lungs the pure rain-washed air, to listen with your eyes, so to speak, to the delicate harmony of all these soft, subdued colors.

On a fair day, when the sun is sinking toward the horizon, everything glows and flushes like the face of a handsome girl spinning before a big fire. The tones all warm and brighten, kindly nature is vibrant, emotional; one feels that during the day she has loved much, enjoyed much, worked much. The forest is warm, and in its foliage gleam diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and now and then on its mossy trunks spreads a startling patch of gold. It is an orchestra with its full effects, a rich harmony, dazzling as the sudden opening of a royal jewel-case, like a cathedral where the trumpets sound while a whole people sing Hallelujah!

On a gray day it is quite different: no gaiety, no loud noise; kindly nature is going to bed without drums or trumpets, with moist eyes, having yawned a little. This evening the violins whose duty it is to send her to sleep are muted and resound slowly; the saddened bows barely skim the strings; one must listen carefully to catch the sound, which is like the music in a dream. But their voices are so soft, their harmony so delicate, that the epicurean idler who loves the music of the eyes would find it hard to choose between the trumpets and the violins, between the forest hidden behind its grey veil and the forest shining in the golden light.

We were journeying under some beeches when a soft little breeze passed overhead, caressing the tops of the trees, which at once began to whisper, and, shaking themselves like wet birds, covered us with a deluge of beautiful glistening diamonds.

"Good gracious!" said Louise, stopping short; "that nasty breeze! I am soaked through!"

Her skirt blew to one side, and I saw her two little soft boots, pressed close together and half hidden in the grass.

"Absolutely soaking; my hood blew up, and there is a deluge down my neck, a regular river!"

"Where is it, my poor darling?"

"Where is it? I tell you in my neck."

I wiped her throat, I adjusted the hood, and when she was quite dry again she said with a smile:

"That is very nice of you."

I even think I kissed her. This put her in a good humor, so that we skipped over the ferns, she hanging on my arm; then all at once, as we got back into the echoing silence of the high trees, she began to sing, to the tune of the *Marseillaise*:

March on, march on, wicked husband
Who does not love his little wife,
Not at all, not all, not at all.

And she sang it in such a swaggering little way, taking long steps, showing her pretty white teeth, and squeezing my arm so affectionately that I began to sing with her.

We were very childish and were quite aware of the fact, but nevertheless thoroughly enjoyed it.

All at once we were stopped by a sort of bog, a dried-up pond, a deserted quarry, I don't know exactly what it was, but the ground was turned up, the trees seemed broken down, and angry roots stood out, twisting themselves among the briars.

"Don't you think we will lose our way?" said Louise, looking at me.

"Why no, dear."

"If we *should* get lost, what would Baby say to-morrow? dear soul, asleep there at home in his white crib. Won't you *please* turn back?"

"But we are twenty minutes' walk from home, no more."

"Yes, yes, all travellers who get lost in forests always think that they are within twenty minutes' walk of home. I don't like those horrid twisted trees; there must be a lot of live things in between those roots."

She shivered, and, leaning forward to listen:

"There, don't you hear? Don't you hear muffled blows?"

Hush, there it is! very, very muffled! At this time of day, in the forest, what can it be? The sun is setting; let us go back!"

I listened, and I really heard a dull sound, the cause of which I immediately guessed. I could have told her what it was, but it was such a pleasure to see her there so close to me, serious, listening, her lips parted, her eyes questioning mine; it was such happiness to feel her trembling on my breast, taking refuge there, that, selfish man that I was, I answered unhesitatingly:

"Yes, it is strange, but I do hear muffled blows. We will go and see what it is; it can't be far off."

"Go and see! George, dearest, are you mad?"

She flung her arms about me, and, rising on tiptoe to reach my ear:

"I am awfully afraid," she whispered; "go back, *please* go back."

"How timid you are! Don't you recognize the sound of the splitters' mallets. They are working down by the clearing."

"You think you can reassure me with your splitters! What are your splitters splitting?"

"They are splitting up big rounds of oak to make barrel-staves; that is the whole mystery!"

"Are you perfectly sure?"

"Yes, dear."

"And are these wood-splitters honest people?"

"Yes, particularly this especial lot, whom I am very well acquainted with. We will go and see them; it is about three minutes from here."

She decided to follow me, though not without a little hanging back. A few minutes later we were in the most picturesque spot in the world, opposite two or three huts like the Indian wigwams, on the shores of Lake Ontario, which we read of in Cooper's novels. Imagine a mass of boards and tree-trunks, the whole black, mossy, dark, and damp under the thick foliage, and topped by a white chimney from which a splendid plume of white smoke issued, to lose itself in the green arch above. Around this encampment were logs heaped together, mountains of chips, yellowish red planks piled up in a pyramid, and, on a rope stretched from one tree to another, two or three bits of linen were

trying to dry. Around the huts the ground was trodden smooth, and in front of the tiny low door a group of chickens devoured the grain which an old woman was throwing to them.

"Good evening, Monsieur and Madame," said the good woman when she saw us approaching. "Won't you come in and get warm? It is very chilly this evening."

Louise looked at it all as one looks at a successful stage setting. We entered. The inside was worthy of the outside.

In the middle of the irregularly shaped hut, which was full of nooks and corners, a beautiful fire was burning on the ground between four iron bars, which kept the coals together and indicated the location of the fireplace. The flames rose high, the roof having an aperture like that of the impluvium of a Roman house, and beyond the opening, through a wide, yawning chimney, which let the light in and the smoke out, could be seen the branches and the gray sky. Among the ashes stood a pot in which something was boiling, and in the corners of the hut, which was crowded with materials scraps and tools of all kinds, three men, one of whom was a little old fellow with hollow, brick-red cheeks, were pounding away with might and main. They were father, son and son-in-law; they lived together, and from year's end to year's end, summer and winter, in this hovel which served them as a workshop, split and re-split their oaken billets.

About once a week the son went to the village for a stock of provisions, and that was all. On Sundays the whole family played at bowls in the shade of the tall trees.

When we entered the workmen stopped, and each of them, after greeting us, laid down the enormous shining axe with which he was armed—a fearful instrument, something like the chopper of a guillotine, fitted with a little handle, and well adapted for executing oak trees, but of a sinister aspect. Louise moved closer to me on the little bench where we were seated.

"Do we interrupt your work?" I asked the old man.

"Not at all, sir, thank you, but it is supper-time."

The two young men pulled down their sleeves and went over to a heavy, primitive table made of a plank and four roughly-hewn legs. While they were arranging the thick plates of bluish earthenware, the old woman had gotten out a big frying-pan, and thrown an armful of chips on the fire.

In this strange, rough interior Louise looked to me so fine and delicate, so elegant, with her long undressed kid gloves, her little soft boots, and her tucked-up skirt ! She was screening her face from the heat of the flames with her outstretched hands, and from the corner of her eye, as I was talking to the workmen, was watching the butter, which was beginning to sizzle in the pan.

Suddenly she rose, and, taking the handle of the frying-pan from the old woman's grasp—

"Won't you let me help you make the omelet?"

The good housewife gave up the utensil with a smile, and Louise found herself alone, in the attitude of an angler who is holding on to his rod at the moment when the float begins to bob up and down. The firelight shone full upon her; her eyes were fixed on the liquid butter, her arms were outstretched, and she was biting her lips slightly, probably to give herself strength.

"It's pretty heavy for madame's little hands," said the old man; "I'll bet it's the first time you ever made an omelet in a wood-cutter's hut, isn't it, my lady?"

Louise nodded an assent without turning her head.

"The eggs! the eggs!" she cried all at once, with such an anxious intonation that we all burst out laughing.

"The eggs! the butter is beginning to swell! Come quickly, or I won't be responsible."

The old woman beat up the eggs briskly.

"The parsley!" cried the old man.

"And the lard, and the salt!" said the young ones.

Then everybody set to work; they cut, and chopped, and pounded, while Louise, crimson-cheeked, stamped her foot, and cried: "Hurry, oh, hurry!"

At last there was a terrific disturbance in the frying-pan, and the great work began. We all gathered around the fire, looking on anxiously, for every one having had a finger in the pie, all were alike interested in the result of the operation. The good woman, on her knees before a large platter, raised the corners of the omelet with her knife. It was beginning to turn gold-color.

"Now, madame has only to turn it," she said.

"Just one quick jerk," added the old man.

"Mustn't do it too hard," observed one of the young ones.

"All together! go it, dear," I remarked in my turn.

"If you all talk to me at once——"

"Hurry, Madame."

"If you all talk to me at once, I'll never dare to. It's awfully heavy!"

"Just one quick jerk."

"Oh, I can't! it's going to spill! Oh, dear me!"

In the heat of action her hood had fallen off. She was as rosy as a peach, her eyes shone, and, though bemoaning her fate, every once in a while she burst out laughing. At last, after a supreme effort, the frying-pan shook, and the omelet rolled, rather heavily, I must admit, into the big dish that the old woman held out for it.

Never was there a better-looking omelet.

"I am sure the little lady's arms must be tired," said the old woodman, cutting thick slices from his big round loaf.

"No, not very," said my wife, laughing gayly; "but I am very anxious to taste my—our omelet."

And we all seated ourselves at the table, with very clean plates before us. A red, white and blue rooster strutted on mine. When we had tasted the omelet and the wine of these good people we rose to go. The sun had set, and the woodcutter's whole family came out of the hut, and wished us good-night as they watched us start.

"Don't you want my son to go with you?" the old woman called after us.

It was beginning to grow dark and damp under the trees, and little by little we began to walk faster.

"Those are happy people," said Louise to me presently; "Can't we come and breakfast with them some morning? We will put Baby in one of the donkey's paniers, and a big pie and some good wine in the other. Are you afraid of losing your way, George?"

"No, dear; don't be alarmed."

"A big pie and some good wine—what's that I see down there?"

"Nothing; just a tree."

"Just a tree—just a tree!" she murmured. "And behind us, don't you hear something?"

"It is the wind among the leaves, or a dead branch breaking as it falls."

Those persons are fortunate who, in the middle of a wood

at night, can feel as calm as though seated by their own hearthstones.

One does not tremble, but the silence grows troublesome. Involuntarily one looks into the shadow to try to define the confused forms which appear and change at every moment. A whole world cries and breaks under foot; and if one stops, from the distance come the plaintive howls of a dog, the screams of the owls calling to their mates, and other and more inexplicable noises from far and near. A strange something weighs on you and surrounds you. If alone, you walk faster; if there are two of you, you draw closer together and are glad to walk arm in arm. My wife hung on mine.

"Shall we turn woodcutters? We will build a pretty little hut, very simple, but attractive; I should have little curtains at the windows, a carpet on the floor, and my piano in a corner."

She said all this in a low voice, and now and then her hand trembled on my arm.

"You will soon get enough of your hut, my darling."

"Horrid thing!"

And then she added, after a moment's pause:

"Then you think I don't love you, you and your son? Indeed, my dear ones, I love you, indeed, indeed I do! Everyday happiness cannot be expressed; one lives so familiarly with it, that one doesn't notice it. It is like our daily bread; who thinks of paying it any respect? and yet it is life itself— isn't it?"

"But once in a while, when we look into our souls, when we drop our heads in our hands and think, we say to ourselves: 'I am ungrateful, for I am happy, and I thank no one.'"

"And again, when we are alone together, walking arm in arm—now, this passing moment—it seems like nothing much, and yet—I love you, dear heart, I love you!"

She leaned her head against my arm and pressed me close.

"Good God!" she said, "if I were to lose you!"

She spoke in a whisper, as though she were afraid. Was it the night and the darkness that frightened her, or her own words?

"I have often dreamed," she went on, "that I was bidding you and the child good-bye. You both cried, and I pressed

you so close to me that we seemed like one person. They were nightmares, you know, but I didn't mind them, for they showed me so plainly that my life was wrapped up in yours, my two dear ones. What is that crackling? Didn't you see something pass in front of us?"

My only answer was to take her in my arms, and to kiss her from my heart.

And we walked on; but we could not start the conversation again. Now and then she pressed my arm and halted, saying:

"Hush! listen—no, it's nothing."

At last we could see through the trees a little light which disappeared from time to time, hidden by a tree-trunk, and then shone out again. It was the lamp which was waiting for us behind the parlor curtains. We pushed the gate open and were at home. It was high time: we were soaked through.

I fetched a thick fagot myself, and when the flame was clear and crackling, we sat ourselves down by the wide fireplace. She was shivering, poor girl. I pulled off her shoes and stockings and held her feet to the blaze, protecting them with my hands.

"Thank you, dearest, thank you," she said, leaning on my shoulder, and she looked at me with so much affection that I felt myself ready to cry.

"What did you tell me in that horrid wood, little woman?" I asked when she felt better.

"Are you thinking about that? I was frightened, that was all, and when people are frightened they see ghosts."

"We will turn woodcutters, won't we?"

She kissed me laughing, and said:

"It is time to go to bed; come, man of the woods!"

I think this was our last walk together, and that is why I remember it so well. Often since I have gone over the same ground in gloomy weather, when the sun was setting; often have I passed through the ferns on which her feet had trodden, and separated the grass with my hands, poor madman that I was, to find the blurred traces of her footsteps. Often have I stopped in the clearing under the birches which showered us, and have thought I saw her skirt flutter in the shadow, have thought I heard her little cries of alarm, and, coming back in the dark, have found again on my path all

the memories she left there; from the dog's distant howling to the snapping of the twigs, from the trembling of her arm to the kiss which I gave her.

I once went back to the woodcutter's. I saw the good people again, the smoked hut, the little bench on which we sat together, and I asked for a drink of water, to look once more on the glass which her lips had touched.

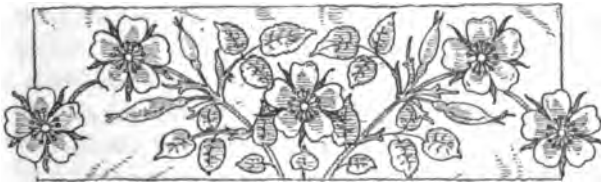
"And the little lady who made omelets so well? She isn't sick, is she?" asked the old woman.

She must have seen the tears in my eyes, for she said no more, and I went away.

And so it is, that save in my heart, where she is always, all that was once *her* is becoming blurred and distant and obscured.

It is the common law, but it is cruel! Even my poor child is learning to forget her, and when I ask him,—I cannot help doing it:

"Dear child, do you recollect your mother when she did this or that?"—he answers yes, but alas! I see that he no longer remembers.



A TEXAS NORTHER*

BY C. W. HUNTER

We were riding along the middle fork of the Concho, Lieut. Ward of the Tenth Cavalry, Caswell, chief clerk at the post sutler's and myself. We had been out after antelope without success and late in the afternoon found ourselves some twenty miles from Fort Concho, men and mounts tired with a day's pounding over the plains. Private Bilkins, whom the Lieutenant had taken along to spread our noon-day lunch and lead the pack horse, rode at the rear, his big gray following with the faithfulness of a troop horse, while the pack animal bore no heavier a burden than a pair of jack-rabbits which Caswell had ignominiously potted. The overland trail was some five miles to the northward, but heavy clouds were banked in the northern sky and the timber along the stream offered some protection from the threatened storm. The middle fork of the Concho joined the main river within half a mile of the fort, and, as it was a rather straight little stream we lost little distance by travelling along its banks. It would have been impossible to camp on the open prairie in a storm, so, take it altogether, we were riding along the middle fork of the Concho because it was the wisest thing we could do.

A blast of air, so cold that it seemed to almost freeze one's blood, rushed over us just as the sun was hidden on the horizon by the advancing cloud. A band of cattle, two hundred or more in compact mass, plunged madly past, their heads near the ground and their long horns shining in the glow of the false twilight. Crash, through the underbrush, splash, through the stream and then wildly on toward the southward tore the cattle.

Over a swell of the plains came other herds all running like race horses. Antelope, whose fleet feet and far-reaching vision had been their own protection and the cause of our failure all the day, skimmed the ground, their white tails bobbing with their nimble bounds. To the southward, al-

*A Western tale written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

ways to the southward fled the creatures of the plains, as if in flight lay safety from the blast; as if flesh and blood could out-speed the ice wind.

"She's coming!" exclaimed the lieutenant. Inelegant, perhaps, but, save in its unwarranted designation of a meteorological gender, entirely truthful. Turning our horses sharply to the right and restraining at the beginning their symptoms of a desire to bolt, we rode into the thickest of the timber and then eastward at a gallop which lacked little of a lively run. Colder blew the north wind. Blast-driven drops of rain began to slap our cheeks with their stinging picket-warnings that the storm was nearly upon us, and we were anxiously looking for some embankment along the stream which would partially shelter us under its lee, when Bilkins wantonly broke the rules and regulations of the service by treating his superior officer in a most flippant and unmilitary manner. His big gray bounded by, the pack horse keeping noble time to giant leaps. "Come on:" yelled Bilkins, "There's a house——"

He doubtless added something more but his words, like the cattle, went to the southward. We overtook Bilkins in fifty yards and in fifty more ended a wild race to a miserable shanty which the sharp eyes of the soldier had seen.

Before we could dismount, half a dozen men came out and the cheery voice of Capt. Hall was heard: "Just in time, Lieutenant! Boys, help the gentlemen with their horses."

Five minutes later the animals were safe in a corral near the shanty, from which they could not escape during the storm, and we were in the house, where Capt. Hall and a detail of state rangers had taken refuge. A fire was soon roaring in the old fire-place, for the fierce wind without caused a magnificent draft.

Darkness and the storm. Men rolled in saddle blankets and sleeping on the dirt floor. The dreary drip of drops which come through the leaking roof. And the roar added to the blast and the ground trembles as a herd of bellowing cattle thunders past.

"What a night and what a storm!" said Capt. Hall. "I pity any cowboy who is caught out to-night. No man could live through such a Norther unless he was muffled like an Esquimaux."

We didn't know it then, but later we learned that all

alone a woman was riding through the night; while we huddled in the shanty, the bitter wind, rain which froze where it fell, even death in the darkness were defied by a love which bore a woman to warn as worthless a scoundrel as lived in Texas.

A long time Capt. Hall gazed at the fire, his big eyes looking bigger in the blaze. Very innocent eyes were his, mild and liquid like a maiden's. This leader of the rangers, captain of a daring band of reckless riders whose mission was the capture of desperate outlaws, had the face of a poet and the eyes of a school-girl. At length he said, unconsciously using the local vernacular:

"You all better see this thing out. We are after a man who is wanted for some score of crimes, big and little. Life at Fort Concho must be rather dreary. Get up, guard, mount; drill; the sun-set gun; taps; go to bed. Isn't that about the routine? Come with us in the morning and see us catch Jack Brown. He's at a ranch some four miles from Johnson station and about eight miles from here. We'll surround the ranch-house as soon as its light and, if there's any shooting you can watch it from the timber. Then we'll all go back to the fort together. We'll have breakfast at the ranch and that will be worth staying over for. See us capture Brown, and get your breakfast."

"You forget I am a soldier" replied Lieut. Ward somewhat nettled "and would hardly hide behind a tree while a dozen men captured a single outlaw."

"Pshaw," said Capt. Hall. "It isn't in the line of your duty to expose yourself to the bullets of any cattle-thief the rangers may arrest. I don't suppose there will be any resistance, but I never could forgive myself if any of you gentlemen came to harm. I reckon I was thinking as much of your breakfast as of our own mission. It's a long ride to the fort on an empty stomach."

I remembered this Jack Brown as a long haired, ignorant, product of the mesquite. A drunken loafer, a cheap gambler and a swaggering bully, but really dangerous. A man who was ready to shoot on small provocation and proud of his reputation as a second-class desperado. While Capt. Hall was talking I had a vision of a swarthy, black-haired man, dressed like a cowboy, who was slapping the face of a Mexican girl. The girl was crouching against the adobe wall of

Morris' dance hall at San Angelo and offering no resistance to his blows, but only cried "Oh ; Jack! Jack!" A dozen men stood near but none offered to interfere. I remembered that I actually started toward the pair intending, in some vague way, to protest, but ere I reached them the man entered the dance hall. Five minutes afterwards the girl was paying for his liquor at the bar and I was congratulating myself that I had escaped from perpetrating one of the most foolish acts of my life.

The girl was known as "Press," a half-caste Mexican creature, who gave Brown the larger share of her earnings, bore his blows with meekness and would have driven a stiletto into the man who conquered him in an encounter. But Hall was saying:

"We learned at San Angelo yesterday that Brown was at the cattle ranch. Sergeant Watson got quite thick with the girl Press, but she knew nothing about Brown or pretended ignorance. We intended to reach the ranch at sunset but the norther stopped us.

That girl Press is devoted to Brown and would raise money some way to bribe a Mexican to warn him, but money would not hire a Mexican, or any other man, to face this Norther, so there is no danger that he will be on guard. He cannot escape unless he was caught out on the range in the storm and is now at some other ranch."

There was only a faint glow in the East when we mounted our horses next morning. The Norther had spent its fury and the promise of a pleasant day was born on the soft winds of the South. Only a faint tremor, a lingering chill in the early air, as if the trees and grass were shaking off the coldness of the night. A sharp ride to the westward and, just as the scarlet banners of the sun were seen on the horizon, we drew rein in the woods some hundred yards from the house where Jack Brown was supposed to be hiding. The ranch house was a wretched thing constructed of upright poles, the cracks between filled with mud. At the rear a shed with a sloping roof. The house had been built within a few feet of the stream where the bank was some twelve feet high. A door in the front room opened to the southward; one in the shed to the north.

Like Indians surrounding the cabin of the settler, the rangers stationed themselves in the form of a horseshoe

around the house, the "points," or "heels" of the shoe resting on the bank of the stream whence the rear door could be commanded by a cross-fire. I confess I felt, as I watched these preparations, very much as I imagine a robber must feel while he reconnoiters a dwelling when intent upon some unlawful undertaking. Everything was ready. Captain Hall, Lieutenant Ward, Caswell and four rangers rode to the front of the house and stopped some hundred feet from the door. Then, for the first time, we saw a horse tied to a post near the doorway. Steam was rising from its sides; low-drooping head and hollow flanks showed that the brute had been ridden long and hard.

"One of the men has just got home" whispered Captain Hall, as he dismounted. Accompanied by three of the rangers, while the fourth held the horses, he walked to the door.

"Hello?" was the response to his knock. A short parley, a demand for admittance, a profane reply and then the sharp report of a rifle. One of the rangers turned his back toward the house, took one step and fell heavily on his face. Crash! A dozen Winchesters sent a dozen bullets into the house. Some struck the poles but a few found their way through the mud-mended cracks. No order to seek shelter of a tree was needed now. In two minutes Lieutenant Ward and Caswell had added their rifles to the fire, and, after it was all over I found that the magazine of my own Winchester was empty. The passion of a man-hunt conquers, as it always will, until, in the evolution of time the intoxication of battle is outbred from human nature. I don't know how long we fired or how long the answering shots came from the shanty, but suddenly the door was flung inward and a man stepped boldly out.

An instant the rifles cooled. I saw Jack Brown's gaudy sombrero, its wide rim and massive crown glistening with silver ornaments. Black hair hanging to the shoulders, the leather "chaps" of a cowboy, and then—straight outward shot two arms, gleaming black eyes sighted two heavy Colts, and at their report a ranger dropped his rifle because a bullet had shattered an arm. Then a volley.

The broad hat slipped downward over the black eyes, straight up in the air two pistols sent their harmless lead and to the ground in a heap sank the body.

The rangers on guard at the rear ran toward the front when

their ears told them the outlaw had braved his fate. We gathered around the fallen man, all honoring in our hearts the hopeless daring of his death, and Captain Hall lifted the sombrero from his face.

"The devil!" he yelled. "Run to the rear, boys."

Too late! idle to beat the bush; useless a hasty hunt through the timber. Long afterwards we knew that from the limb of an oak, around which a wild grapevine had woven its dense foliage, Jack Brown saw a sight which would have redeemed a being worth, in the broad economy of eternal time, the trouble of redemption.

Love had faced that awful storm. Love had done its best to bring a warning. Love laid down its life that a miserable and worse than worthless man might spring out of a door, plunge over an embankment and hide in a tree.

As tenderly as if her life had been all purity and her soul all untouched by sin, we bore her body to the fort; and the next day, decently dressed in the garments of her sex, the body of Press was consigned to an unmarked grave on a barren hill not a thousand yards from the spot where Brown used to beat her.

And no larger funeral had been seen on the frontier.



UNCLE ETHAN RIPLEY*

BY HAMLIN GARLAND

Uncle Ethan had a theory that a man's character could be told by the way he sat in a wagon seat.

"A mean man sets right plumb in the *middle* o' the seat, as much as to say, 'Walk, gol darn yeh, who cares?' But a man that sets in one corner o' the seat, much as to say, 'Jump in—cheaper t' ride 'n to walk,' you can jest tie to."



Uncle Ripley was prejudiced in favor of the stranger, therefore, before he came opposite the potato patch, where the old man was "bugging his vines." The stranger drove a jaded-looking pair of calico ponies, hitched to a clattering democrat wagon, and he sat on the extreme end of the seat, with the lines in his right hand, while his left hand rested on his thigh, with his little finger gracefully crooked and his

*From "Prairie Folks."—F. J. Shulte & Co., publishers. Illustrated by H. M. Wolcott for Short Stories.

elbows akimbo. He wore a blue shirt, with gay colored arm-lets just above the elbows, and his vest hung unbuttoned down his lank ribs. It was plain he was well pleased with himself.

As he pulled up and threw one leg over the end of the seat, Uncle Ethan observed that the left spring was much more worn than the other, which proved that it was not accidental, but that it was the driver's habit to sit on that end of the seat.

"Good afternoon," said the stranger, pleasantly.

"Good afternoon, sir."

"Bugs purty plenty?"

"Plenty enough, I gol! I don't see where they all come fum."

"Early Rose?" inquired the man, as if referring to the bugs.

"No; Peachblows an' Carter Reds. My Early Rose is over near the house. The old woman wants 'em near. See the darned things!" he pursued, rapping savagely on the edge of the pan to rattle the bugs back.

"How do yeh kill 'em—scald 'em?"

"Mostly. Sometimes I"——

"Good piece of oats," yawned the stranger, listlessly.

"That's barley."

"So 'tis. Didn't notice."

Uncle Ethan was wondering what the man was. He had some pots of black paint in the wagon, and two or three square boxes.

"What do yeh think 'o Cleveland's chances for a second term?" continued the man, as if they had been talking politics all the while.

Uncle Ripley scratched his head. "Waal—I dunno—bein' a Republican—I think"——

"That's so—it's a purty scaly outlook. I don't believe in second terms myself," the man hastened to say.

"Is that your new barn acrost there?" pointing with his whip.

"Yes, sir, it is," replied the old man, proudly. After years of planning and hard work he had managed to erect a little wooden barn, costing possibly three hundred dollars. It was plain to be seen he took a childish pride in the fact of its newness.

The stranger mused. "A lovely place for a sign," he said as his eyes wandered across its shining yellow broadside.

Uncle Ethan stared, unmindful of the bugs crawling over the edge of his pan. His interest in the pots of paint deepened.

"Couldn't think 'o lettin' me paint a sign on that barn?" the stranger continued, putting his locked hands around one knee, and gazing away across the pig-pen at the building.

"What kind of a sign? Gol darn your skins!" Uncle Ethan pounded the pan with his paddle and scraped two or three crawling abominations off his leathery wrist.

It was a beautiful day, and the man in the wagon seemed unusually loath to attend to business. The tired ponies slept in the shade of the lombardies. The plain was draped in a warm mist, and shadowed by vast, vaguely defined masses of clouds—a lazy June day.

"Dodd's Family Bitters," said the man, waking out of his abstraction with a start, and resuming his working manner. "The best bitter in the market." He alluded to it in the singular. "Like to look at it? No trouble to show goods, as the fellah says," he went on hastily, seeing Uncle Ethan's hesitation.

He produced a large bottle of triangular shape, like a bottle for pickled onions. It had a red seal on top, and a strenuous caution in red letters on the neck, "None genuine unless 'Dodd's family bitters' is blown in the bottom."

"Here's what it cures," pursued the agent, pointing at the side, where, in an inverted pyramid, the names of several hundred diseases were arranged, running from "gout" to "pulmonary complaints," etc.

"I gol! she cuts a wide swath, don't she?" exclaimed Uncle Ethan, profoundly impressed with the list.

"They ain't no better bitter in the world," said the agent, with a conclusive inflection.

"What's its speshy-*a/ity*? Most of 'em have some speshy-*a/ity*."

"Well—summer complaints—an'—an'—spring an' fall troubles—tones ye up, sort of."

Uncle Ethan's forgotten pan was empty of his gathered bugs. He was deeply interested in this man. There was something he liked about him.

"What does it sell fur?" he asked, after a pause.

"Same price as them cheap medicines—dollar a bottle—big bottles, too. Want one?"

"Wal, mother ain't to home, an' I don't know as she'd like this kind. We ain't been sick f'r years. Still, they's no tellin'," he added, seeing the answer to his objection in the agent's eyes. "Times is purty close, too, with us, y' see; we've jest built that stable."

"Say, I'll tell yeh what I'll do," said the stranger, waking up and speaking in a warmly generous tone. "I'll give you ten bottles of the bitter if you'll let me paint a sign on that barn. It won't hurt the barn a bit, and if you want 'o, you can paint it out a year from date. Come, what d' ye say?"

"I guess I hadn't better."

The agent thought that Uncle Ethan was after more pay, but in reality he was thinking of what his little old wife would say.

"It simply puts a family bitter in your home that may save you fifty dollars this comin' fall. You can't tell."

Just what the man said after that Uncle Ethan didn't follow. His voice had a confidential purring sound as he stretched across the wagon-seat and talked on, eyes half shut. He straightened up at last, and concluded in the tone of one who has carried his point:

"So! If you didn't want to use the whole twenty-five bottles y'rself, why! sell it to your neighbors. You can get twenty dollars out of it easy, and still have five bottles of the best family bitter that ever went into a bottle."

It was the thought of this opportunity to get a buffalo-skin coat that consoled Uncle Ethan as he saw the hideous black letters appearing under the agent's lazy brush.

It was the hot side of the barn, and painting was no light work. The agent was forced to mop his forehead with his sleeve.



"Say, hain't got a cooky or anything, and a cup o' milk handy?" he said at the end of the first enormous word, which ran the whole length of the barn.

Uncle Ethan got him the milk and cooky, which he ate with an exaggeratedly dainty action of his fingers, seated meanwhile on the staging which Uncle Ripley had helped him to build. This lunch infused new energy into him, and in a short time "DODD'S FAMILY BITTERS, Best in the Market," disfigured the sweet-smelling pine boards.

Ethan was eating his self-obtained supper of bread and milk when his wife came home.

"Who's been a-paintin' on that barn?" she demanded, her



bead-like eyes flashing, her withered little face set in an ominous frown. "Ethan Ripley, what you been doin'?"

"Nawthin'," he replied feebly.

"Who painted that sign on there?"

"A man come along an' he wanted to paint that on there, and I let 'im; and it's my barn, anyway. I guess I can do what I'm a min' to with it," he ended, defiantly; but his eyes wavered.

Mrs. Ripley ignored the defiance. "What under the sun p'sessed you to do such a thing as that, Ethan Ripley? I

declare I don't see! You git fooler an' fooler ev'ry day you live, I *do* believe."

Uncle Ethan attempted a defense.

"Well, he paid me twenty-five dollars f'r it, anyway."

"Did 'e?" She was visibly affected by this news.

"Well, anyhow, it amounts to that; he give me twenty-five bottles"—

Mrs. Ripley sank back in her chair. "Well, I swan to Bungay? Ethan Ripley—wal, you beat all I *ever* see!" she added in despair of expression. "I thought you had *some* sense left, but you hain't, not one blessed scimpton. Where *is* the stuff?"

"Down cellar, an' you needn't take on no airs, ol' woman. I've known you to buy things you did'nt need time an' time 'n' agin, tins and things, an' I guess you wish you had back that ten dollars you paid for that illustrated Bible."

"Go 'long an' bring that stuff up here. I never see such a man in my life. It's a wonder he didn't do it f'r two bottles." She glared out at the sign, which faced directly upon the kitchen window.

Uncle Ethan tugged the two cases up and set them down on the floor of the kitchen. Mrs. Ripley opened a bottle and smelled of it like a cautious cat.

"Ugh! Merciful sakes, what stuff! It ain't fit f'r a hog to take. What'd you think you was goin' to do with it?" she asked in poignant disgust.

"I expected to take it—if I was sick. Whaddy ye s'pose?" He defiantly stood his ground, towering above her like a leaning tower.

"The hull cartload of it?"

"No. I'm going to sell part of it an' git me an overcoat"—

"Sell it!" she shouted. "Nobuddy'll buy that sick'nin' stuff but an old numbskull like you. Take that slop out o' the house this minute! Take it right down to the sink-hole an' smash every bottle on the stones."

Uncle Ethan and the cases of medicine disappeared, and the old woman addressed her concluding remarks to little Tewksbury, her grandson, who stood timidly on one leg in the doorway, like an intruding pullet.



"Everything around this place 'ud go to rack an' ruin if I didn't keep a watch on that soft-pated old dummy. I thought that lightenin'-rod man had give him a lesson he'd remember, but no, he must go and make a reg'lar"——

She subsided in a tumult of banging pans, which helped her out in the matter of expression and reduced her to a grim sort of quiet. Uncle Ethan went about the house like a convict on shipboard. Once she caught him looking out of the window.

"I should *think* you'd feel proud o' that."

Uncle Ethan had never been sick a day in his life. He was bent and bruised with never-ending toil, but he had nothing especial the matter with him.

He did not smash the medicine, as Mrs. Ripley commanded, because he had determined to sell it. The next Sunday morning, after his chores were done, he put on his best coat of faded diagonal, and was brushing his hair in a ridge across the centre of his high, narrow head, when Mrs. Ripley came in from feeding the calves.

"Where are you goin' now?"

"None o' your business," he replied. "It's darn funny if I can't stir without you wantin' to know all about it. Where's Tewky?"

"Feedin' the chickens. You ain't goin' to take him off this mornin', now! I don't care where you go."

"Who's a-goin' to take him off? I ain't said nothin' about takin' him off."

"Wall, take y'rself off, an' if y' ain't here f'r dinner, I ain't goin' to get no supper."

Ripley took a water-pail and put four bottles of "the bitter" into it, and trudged away up the road with it in a pleasant glow of hope. All nature seemed to declare the day a time of rest, and invited men to disassociate ideas of toil from the rustling green wheat, shining grass, and tossing blooms. Something of the sweetness and buoyancy of all nature permeated the old man's work-calloused body, and he whistled little snatches of the dance tunes he played on his fiddle.

But he found neighbor Johnson to be supplied with another variety of bitter, which was all he needed for the present. He qualified his refusal to buy with a cordial invitation to go out and see his shotes, in which he took infinite pride. But

Uncle Ripley said: "I guess I'll haf t' be goin'; I want to git up to Jennings' before dinner."



He couldn't help feeling a little depressed when he found Jennings away. The next house along the pleasant lane was inhabited by a "new-comer." He was sitting on the horse-trough, holding a horse's halter, while his hired man dashed cold water upon the galled spot on the animal's shoulder.

After some preliminary talk Ripley presented his medicine.

"Hell, no! What do I want of such stuff? When they's anything the matter with me, I take a lunkin' ol' swig of popple-bark and bourbon. That fixes me."

Uncle Ethan moved off up the lane. He hardly felt like whistling now. At the next house he set his pail down in the weeds beside the fence, and went in without it. Doudney came to the door in his bare feet, buttoning his suspenders over a clean boiled shirt. He was dressing to go out.

"Hello, Ripley! I was just goin' down your way. Jest wait a minute an' I'll be out."

When he came out fully dressed, Uncle Ethan grappled him.

"Say, what d' you think o' paytent med"—

"Some of 'em are boss. But y' want 'o know what y're gitt'n'."

"What d' ye think o' Dodd's"—

"Best in the market."

Uncle Ethan straightened up and his face lighted. Doudney went on:

"Yes, sir; best bitter that ever went into a bottle. I know, I've tried it. I don't go much on patent medicines, but when I get a good"—

"Don't want 'o buy a bottle?"



Doudney turned and faced him.

"Buy! No. I've got nineteen bottles I want to *sell*!" Ripley glanced up at Doudney's new granary and there read: "Dodd's Family Bitters." He was stricken dumb. Doudney saw it all and roared.

"Wal, that's a good one! We two tryin' to sell each other bitters. Ho— ho— ho—har, whoop! wal, this is rich! How many bottles did you git?"

"None o' your business," said Uncle Ethan, as he turned and made off, while Doudney screamed with merriment.

On his way home Uncle Ethan grew ashamed of his burden. Doudney had canvassed the whole neighborhood, and he practically gave up the struggle. Everybody he met seemed determined to find out what he had been doing, and at last he began lying about it.

"Hello, Uncle Ripley, what y' got there in that pail?"

"Goose eggs f'r settin'."

He disposed of one bottle to old Gus Peterson. Gus never paid his debts, and he would only promise fifty cents "on tick" for the bottle, and yet so desperate was Ripley that this *quasi* sale cheered him up not a little.

As he came down the road, tired, dusty and hungry, he climbed over the fence in order to avoid seeing that sign on the barn, and slunk into the house without looking back.

He couldn't have felt meaner about it if he had allowed a Democratic poster to be pasted there.

The evening passed in grim silence, and in sleep he saw that sign wriggling across the side of the barn like boa-constrictors hung on rails. He tried to paint them out, but every time he tried it the man seemed to come back with a sheriff, and savagely warned him to let it stay till the year was up. In some mysterious way the agent seemed to know every time he brought out the paint-pot, and he was no longer the pleasant-voiced individual who drove the calico ponies.

As he stepped out into the yard next morning, that abominable, sickening, scrawling advertisement was the first thing that claimed his glance—it blotted out the beauty of the morning.

Mrs. Ripley came to the window, buttoning her dress at the throat, a whisp of her hair sticking assertively from the little knob at the back of her head.

"Lovely, ain't it! An' I've got to see it all day long. I can't look out the winder but that thing's right in my face." It seemed to make her savage. She hadn't been in such a temper since her visit to New York. "I hope you feel satisfied with it."

Ripley walked off to the barn. His pride in its clean, sweet newness was gone. He slyly tried the paint to see if it couldn't be scraped off, but it was dried in thoroughly. Whereas, before, he had taken delight in having his neighbors turn and look at the building, now he kept out of sight whenever he saw a team coming. He hoed corn, away in the back of the field, when he should have been bugging potatoes by the roadside.

Mrs. Ripley was in a frightful mood about it, but she held herself in check for several days. At last she burst forth:

"Ethan Ripley, I can't stand that thing any longer, and I ain't goin' to, that's all! You've got to go and paint that thing out, or I will. I'm just about crazy with it."

"But, mother, I promised"——

"I don't care *what* you promised, it's got to be painted out. I've got the nightmare now, seein' it. I'm goin' to send for a pail o' red paint, and I'm goin' to paint that out if it takes the last breath I've got to do it."

"I'll tend to it, mother, if you won't hurry me"——

"I can't stand it another day. It makes me boil every time I look out the winder."

Uncle Ethan hitched up his team and drove gloomily off to town, where he tried to find the agent. He lived in some other part of the county, however, and so the old man gave up and bought a pot of red paint, not daring to go back to his desperate wife without it.

"Goin' to paint y'r new barn?" inquired the merchant, with friendly interest.

Uncle Ethan turned with guilty sharpness; but the merchant's face was grave and kindly.

"Yes, I thought I'd touch it up a little—don't cost much."

"It pays—always," the merchant said, emphatically.

"Will it—stick jest as well put on evenings?" inquired Uncle Ethan, hesitatingly.

"Yes—won't make any difference. Why? Ain't goin' to have"——

"Waal,—I kind o' thought I'd do it odd times night an' mornin'—kind o' odd times"—

He seemed oddly confused about it, and the merchant looked after him anxiously as he drove away.

After supper that night he went out to the barn, and Mrs. Ripley heard him sawing and hammering. Then the noise ceased, and he came in and sat down in his usual place.

"What y' ben makin'?" she inquired. Tewksbury had gone to bed. She sat darning a stocking.

"I jest thought I'd git the stagin' ready f'r paintin'," he said, evasively.

"Waal! I'll be glad when it's covered up." When she got ready for bed, he was still seated in his chair, and after she had dozed off two or three times she began to wonder why he didn't come. When the clock struck ten, and she realized that he had not stirred, she began to get impatient. "Come, are y' goin' to sit there all night?" There was no reply. She rose up in bed and looked about the room. The broad moon flooded it with light, so that she could see he was not asleep in his chair, as she had supposed. There was something ominous in his disappearance.

"Ethan! Ethan Ripley, where are yeh?" There was no reply to her sharp call. She rose and distractedly looked about among the furniture, as if he might somehow be a cat and be hiding in a corner somewhere. Then she went upstairs where the boy slept, her hard little heels making a curious *tunking* noise on the bare boards. The moon fell across the sleeping boy like a robe of silver. He was alone.

She began to be alarmed. Her eyes widened in fear. All sorts of vague horrors sprang unbidden into her brain. She still had the mist of sleep in her brain.

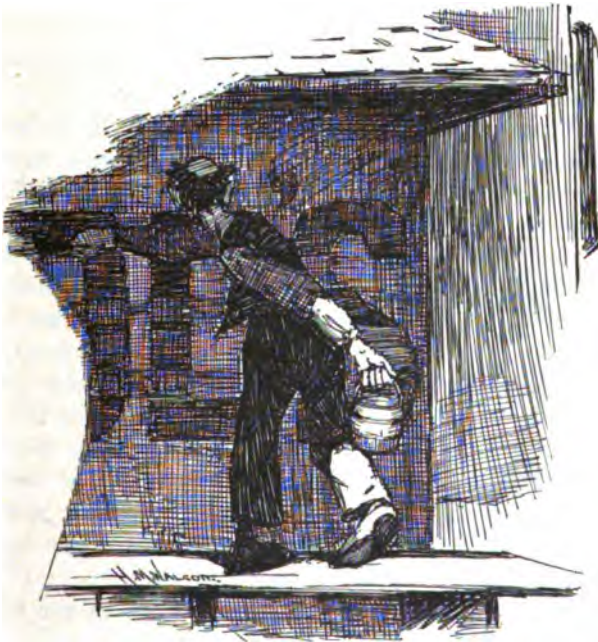
She hurried down the stairs and out into the fragrant night. The katydid was singing in infinite peace under the solemn splendor of the moon. The cattle sniffed and sighed, jangling their bells now and then, and the chickens in the coops stirred uneasily as if overheated. The old woman stood there in her bare feet and long night-gown horror-stricken. The ghastly story of a man who had hung himself in his barn, because his wife deserted him, came into her mind and stayed there with frightful persistency. Her throat filled chokingly.

She felt a wild rush of loneliness. She had a sudden realiza-

tion of how dear that gaunt old figure was, with its grizzled face and ready smile. Her breath came quick and quicker, and she was at the point of bursting into a wild cry to Tewksbury, when she heard a strange noise. It came from the barn, a creaking noise. She looked that way, and saw in the shadowed side a deeper shadow moving to and fro. A revulsion to astonishment and anger took place in her.

"Land o' Bungay! If he ain't paintin' that barn, like a perfect old idiot, in the night."

Uncle Ethan, working desperately, did not hear her feet pattering down the path, and was startled by her shrill voice.



"Well, Ethan Ripley, whaddy y' think you 're doin' now?"

He made two or three slapping passes with the brush, and then snapped, "I'm a-paintin' this barn — whaddy ye s'pose? If ye had eyes y' wouldn't ask."

"Well, you come right straight to bed. What d'you mean by actin' so?"

"You go back into the house an' let me be. I know what I'm a-doin'. You've pestered me about this sign just about enough." He dabbed his brush to and fro as he spoke. His

gaunt figure towered above her in shadow. His slapping brush had a vicious sound.

Neither spoke for some time. At length she said, more gently, "Ain't you comin' in?"

"No—not till I get a-ready. You go 'long an' tend to y'r own business. Don't stan' there an' ketch cold."

She moved off slowly toward the house. His voice subdued her. Working alone out there had rendered him savage; he was not to be pushed any farther. She knew by the tone of his voice that he must not be assaulted. She slipped on her shoes and a shawl, and came back where he was working, and took a seat on a saw-horse.

"I'm a-goin' to sit right here till you come in, Ethan Ripley," she said, in a firm voice, but gentler than usual.

"Waal, you'll set a good while," was his ungracious reply. But each felt a furtive tenderness for the other. He worked on in silence. The boards creaked heavily as he walked to and fro, and the slapping sound of the paint-brush sounded loud in the sweet harmony of the night. The majestic moon

swung slowly round the corner of the barn, and fell upon the old man's grizzled head and bent shoulders. The horses inside could be heard stamping the mosquitoes away, and chewing their hay in pleasant chorus.

The little figure seated on the saw-horse drew the shawl closer about her thin shoulders. Her eyes were in shadow, and her hands were wrapped in her shawl. At last she spoke in a curious tone.

"Well, I don't know as you *was* so very much to blame. I *didn't* want that Bible myself—I held out I did, but I didn't."



Ethan worked on until the full meaning of this unprecedented surrender penetrated his head, and then he threw down his brush.

"Waal, I guess I'll let'er go at that. I've covered up the most of it, anyhow. Guess we'd better go in."

ETCHING: THE PASSING OF A SOUL*

BY JAMES A. WOOD

The glow of the new twilight mottles the placid surface of the Pacific with stripes and blotches of yellow, gray, red, brown and green, in all their various shades, blent into one harmonious mass of color.

The accustomed ear takes no note of the sullen, monotonous boom of the long glassy rollers or the seething of the undertow along the shore—no other sound breaks the stillness.

Up from the smooth, hard beach, beyond the heaps of driftwood and wind-driven sand at the edge of the dark forest of giant pines, stand a few of the rough-board windowless shanties of the coast Indians.

The only signs of life about the village are the smoke which curls up from the openings in the roofs, and several mangy-looking curs, snarling over a decaying fish. But presently, from the smallest and meanest of the huts, comes a shrill and rasping yell, accompanied by a regular beating sound, as of drums. Within, around a smouldering fire, squat half-a-dozen old crones, shaking wooden rattles and thumping huge tambourines. The old *tamanuas* (Indian doctor), scanty clad, stands near a small wooden cradle in which is strapped a three-months-old child, its tiny yellow features clearly impressed by the finger-marks of death. The mother, scarcely more than a child, squats close by, her face buried on her knees.

The drums and rattles go faster and faster; the old *tamanuas* trembles with fervor; his piercing chant grows louder and more hideous. Now he springs from his feet—now falls prostrate. He beats his fists against the hard earth and tears his hair. The old hags unite their voices with his in horrid discord, which, joined in by the curs outside, rises high above the noise of the surf.

The twilight deepens into night.

*A scene on the Pacific coast. Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

The tide is at its lowest ebb, and in the gloom, the stretch of shining sand seems a part of the sea save that a faint line of phosphorescent light marks where the little breakers fall.

For a time all is quiet within the hut; then, from the cracked throats of the old crones comes a wailing chorus of woe, as they sway to and fro in the dim firelight.

Near the rude cradle the little mother weeps silently.

The old *tamanuas* lies exhausted on the ground, apart from the mourning group. His incantations and exorcisms have been in vain.

The infant spirit has passed on.



HAMP YARBROUGH'S WHITE FEATHER*

BY RIPLEY DUNLAP SAUNDERS

"Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve;
Come with your fears and sins opprest,
And make a last resolve."

The imploring words of the old camp-meeting hymn, in the clear and sweet treble of a boy's voice, came floating through the morning stillness of the Arkansas swamp-woods with all the freshness of a bird song. Hamp Yarbrough, riding into Clayton to shoot Dave Gwin on sight, caught the melody with the singer yet unseen, and lazily checked his horse to glance in the direction whence it came. The next moment, from the underbrush that lined either side of the road with a solid hedge of luxuriant green, Dave Gwin's little brother, Billy, pushed his way out. He had been fishing, and a long cane fishing-pole trailed to the earth from one hand, while the other upheld a string of dripping perch. Camp-meeting hymns constituted tuneful Billy Gwin's sole musical stock in trade, and he trolled them out with all the quavers that rightfully belonged to them by the grace of backwoods custom. But despite the quavers, the singer's voice proclaimed the joyousness of youth in its every note, and robbed the hymns of the greater part of that intense melancholy which primitive Christianity seems to think so indispensable to church psalmody.

"Hello, Hamp!" cried the boy, as he gained the shady roadside. "Goin' into town to-day?"

Only the evening before Hamp Yarbrough had sent word to Dave Gwin to defend himself the first time they met, the true Arkansas notification of the opening of a personal difficulty, in which no murderous advantage was to be taken, although deadly results were confidently expected to follow. The two friends, drinking and talking politics, had quarreled suddenly and bitterly, been separated by other friends according to time-honored custom, and then parted with black

*Concerning a brave man. Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

anger in their hearts. Hamp Yarbrough's message, strictly in line with the backwoods code, had followed, and Hamp Yarbrough was on his way now to end the natural suspense caused by such a condition of affairs. A grimly humorous smile wrinkled his lips as Dave Gwin's little brother thus chanced to cross the path leading to a hostile meeting with Dave Gwin. But such untoward circumstance did not affect reckless Hamp Yarbrough's liking for Billy, and he threw one knee over the pommel of his saddle and beamed amiably at the boy's friendly face smiling at him from under its ragged hat-brim.

"Yes, I am, Billy," he said, sociably. "Where you been? Fishin'?"

The question was superfluous, but it was in keeping with country manners, which take nothing for granted at the opening of a casual conversation. Billy held out his string of fish in answer.

"That's what I got," he said complacently. "I've foun' a bully perch hole right below the saw-mill. They bite 's fast 's you kin fling your hook in."

"Worms?" asked Hamp Yarbrough.

Billy nodded. "And assafidity," he added, gravely.

With this important point settled, the boy came barefoot over the road and stood at Hamp Yarbrough's knee. He reached out his sunburned hand and moved it affectionately up and down the horse's muzzle.

"Sol's a good old horse, aint he, Hamp?" he said, finally, with all a boy's love for horses showing in his voice.

"I reckon so," came the owner's modest rejoinder. "He ain't so old, though, Billy. Goin' on six."

"That's old enough," decisively commented Billy, with the knowledge that six years formed a very respectable proportion of his own length of life to date. "It ain't so very old, Hamp, but it's old enough."

Hamp Yarbrough's hearty and ringing laugh sounded strangely from the lips of a man on the verge of a duel. Under the strain of Billy's gravity he must have forgotten for the moment the nature of his morning mission into Clayton.

"I reckon that's right, Billy, from your side of the fence," he agreed at last. "But six years gits by mighty quick when you are older yourself. It don't seem a year to me since I fust traded for Sol."

An odd little pause came after this, and Hamp Yarbrough seemed to have been led into a retrospective reverie by the drift of his conversation with Billy. Then he continued with a queer sound in his voice:

"Your brother Dave was with me the very day I got him. We was up at Moreau together, me and him, and I traded a horse I had and six dollars to boot for Sol. And Dave Gwin rid him then 'fore I did. Sol wa'nt nothin' but a colt, and Dave had a mighty lively time with him. He th'owed me right afterwards."

Billy rested his face confidently against the horse's shoulder.

"He's got over them tricks by now, I reckon, Hamp," he suggested, inquiringly.

"Not so much's you might think," warned Hamp Yarbrough. "It ain't many folks now besides me that Sol keers much about carryin.' An' he's got a mighty ugly temper when things don't go his way."

Billy's eyes glistened with sudden longing.

"Say, Hamp," he began after a yearful pause, and then stopped, with one bare toe digging deep into the dirt of the road, in anxious embarrassment.

"Well?" was the lazy rejoinder.

"Le'mme ride him, won't you, Hamp?"

The gaunt and loose-jointed man in the saddle shook with teasing appreciation of the boy's desire, as he looked down at the quaint little figure.

"Do you know how fur you'd ride him, Billy!" he asked, derisively. "Just about three jumps, and then Sol would have you goin' over some o' these here tree tops."

Billy's face flushed in angry mortification at these taunting words. He glanced up at Hamp Yarbrough with boyish defiance flashing from his eyes.

"That's only what you think, Hamp," he cried. "But I'll just bet you that Sol never saw the day he could th'ow me."

"Shucks!" laughed Hamp Yarbrough, his voice intentionally tantalizing. "Why, Billy, you wouldn't never know Sol was thinkin' of th'owin' you till he had you on the groun' an' was a-lookin' at you. You don't know horses yet."

"That's what you say!" and the boy's tone was still one of wounded pride. "But just give me one show at it, Hamp, and I'll prove that I kin ride."

Hamp Yarbrough slowly swung his leg from the pommel of his saddle, back across his horse's flank, and seemed to dismount with that one semi-circular sweep. Then he leaned over the saddle as he stood, and looked at Billy on the other side with keen amusement in his thin, alert face.

"I'm goin' to let you do it, Billy," he said solemnly. "But I want you to promise that whatever happens you won't hold any hard feelin's agin me fur it."

"They won't nothin' happen, Hamp," proudly responded Billy, a supreme joy beaming from his face. "Just buckle up the stirrups so's I kin git a fair purchase, an' I reckon Sol'n me 'll stay together all right."

Chuckling over the boy's grit, and with true Southern love of an experiment with horse flesh, Hamp Yarbrough bent obediently over the stirrup-straps and buckled them up to fit Billy's short legs. Then he ran one hand soothingly along Sol's neck, and stepped away from the horse after that caress with a face of stone.

"Thar you are, Billy," he announced, almost reproachfully. "And may the Lord have mercy on your soul."

The warning prayer was utterly lost on the eager boy, who already stood with one hand resting on the bridle and the horse's mane. Hamp never knew exactly the tactics Billy employed to reach the saddle, but a glad bound was the main feature of the performance, and it was so quick that Billy's seat was safe before either Hamp Yarbrough or his horse, Sol, realized what was under way. Then the dare-devil country boy bent forward over the pommel, raised one exultant hand in the air, and bringing it down on the horse's flank with a yell of defiant triumph, caused the astonished Solomon to shoot past his master like a bay streak of mingled surprise and indignation. It may be that this sudden aggressiveness on Billy's part was the wisest line of action he could have adopted, for it certainly put Sol on a very confused defensive without giving his brute intellect time to call trickery into play. Down the dewy country road they went at reckless pace, Billy riding in true backwoods style, with elbows flapping but with legs sinuously gripping the horse's side. Then they disappeared around a bend in the road.

Hamp Yarbrough sat down on a log at the roadside, filled with genuine enjoyment of the performance.

"Blame the boy!" he laughed as he glanced along the

trail of Billy's sudden flight. "Ef he ain't got sand when it comes to ridin', well, then, I don't know it when I see it."

Just at that moment, stronger than it had ever done before, the fact that he was on his way into Clayton to kill Billy Gwin's brother recurred to Hamp Yarbrough's mind. It threw the blackest kind of a cloud on his face, and he reached his right hand sullenly back to where his six-shooter swung from the belt under his jeans coat.

The clatter of Sol's hoofs had died away through the woods, and with the sudden haunting thought of his mission pressing down on him, Hamp Yarbrough sat as lonely as though little Billy Gwin, a singing, light-hearted copy of Dave, had never come across his pathway. But for all that, the boy's sunny presence had done its work, and Hamp Yarbrough shrank back from his expected difficulty with Dave Gwin, a loathing horror, new and strange to his reckless life, agitating his frank soul.

"I wish to God I'd never done it!" he muttered, still allowing his hand to rest on the butt of his pistol. "I can't git out of it now, but I swear it'll be like murder, no matter which one of us gits killed. Damn a shootin'-scrape anyway!"

A wild rush back up the road, a boy's cry of delighted victory, a sudden stop that in itself had certain breakneck features, and Billy Gwin threw himself from Sol's back and stood by Hamp Yarbrough's side, flushed and happy.

"I like the way I was th'own," he gasped out tauntingly. "If you've got any worse horses than Sol, Hamp, I wish you'd bring 'em out. I reckon I won't have any trouble ridin' 'em."

The disconsolate figure, drooping in deep revery from the log, so different from the appreciative Hamp Yarbrough of a few minutes before, seemed then to impress the boy himself with the atmosphere of gloom that had so quickly darkened Hamp's own thoughts. Billy looked down at the picture with swift amazement in his eyes.

"What's the matter, Hamp?" he asked. "You ain't got a chill, have you?"

The man glanced up at the boy's sympathetic face with an odd smile.

"I reckon not," he answered, a dull sound in his voice. "But it's my chill day, and I s'pose may be it's a-comin' on me. How did you git along, Billy?"

"Bully," and Billy Gwin's eyes flashed again. "Sol and me had a little argument right aroun' the turn o' the road, but I stayed with him."

Hamp Yarbrough had risen, and was at Sol's side, letting out the stirrups.

"You're just like Dave, Billy, for all the world," he said, still very grave. "Dave 'll ride anything on earth he kin git a-straddle of."

"Hamp," commented Billy Gwin suddenly. "Its kinder funny that to-day you seem to be thinkin' so much about Brother Dave. It's funny because last night at home it was just the same way on his side. He was talkin' about you off and on, all the time."

The quick light that sprang into Hamp Yarbrough's gray eyes was pathetic in its real significance.

"That is sorter strange, Billy," he responded almost eagerly. "What could ha' brought me into Dave's talk last night?"

"Brother Dave seemed to be full of old times," answered the boy. "He was tellin' me what good friends you and him always was, and especially how you helped him to get Sister Mary out from her home the night he ran away with her and they got married. He said he never could ha' done it without you, because old 'Squire Neil had forbid him the house, knowin' that Sister Mary was in love with him."

Poor Hamp Yarbrough laughed at this, but there were tears in his honest eyes as he laughed.

"I went to 'Squire Neil's house to git Miss Mary to go to church with me," he explained. "And the old 'Squire was as sociable as a basket o' chips. I reckon he wouldn't ha' been so friendly ef he'd known that Dave Gwin was a-waitin' fur us in a buggy out on the country road, and that the runaway match was all made up then between him and Miss Mary. I never could look the 'Squire in the face after that though."

There was silence for a moment, and Hamp Yarbrough bent down beside Sol's still heaving flank, as though to examine the girth. When he raised his face again from under the saddle-flap, it had turned very pale, and his grim mouth was outlined in a close, firm grip of the lips.

"You ain't got anything partic'lar to do when you git home, have you, Billy?"

"Not that I know of, Hamp," was Billy Gwin's slightly surprised answer. "Why?"

"I want you to take a note to Dave for me, down at the store," said Hamp Yarbrough, bravely. "It's about a little business I was comin' in to see him about, and I just happen to think that I've got to stop and see Sam Nunnelly before I go into Clayton, an' I may be later'n I expected. You kin take it fur me, can't you, Billy?"

Billy nodded obligingly, "O' course I kin," he assented. "All I got to do is just to go by home an' leave my fish, and then I'll run right down to the store with it."

Hamp Yarbrough took from his pocket a bill for some farming utensils he had bought in Helena in the early Spring, and tore away the blank lower half of the sheet. This he rested against Sol's saddle, and fishing out a pencil stub from his breeches pocket, he began his note to Dave Gwin. It was the most difficult piece of epistolary composition the young farmer had ever essayed in all his humble life. As the formal backdown of a brave man from an affair of honor, sanctioned by all the traditions of his lifelong environment, it was a remarkable and touching production. Hamp wrote as follows,

DEAR DAVE,

I was coming to town to settel our difficulty the way I sent you word. I run across Billy out in the woods, and have been letting him ride Sol and laughing at him. I write these few lines to let you know that my mind is chainged so far as I am concerned. I am not going to shoot on sight and I lieve the thing in your hands.

Your friend,

HAMPTON YARBROUGH.

When this clear withdrawal from the consequences of a challenge issued by himself was carefully sealed, by liberal moistening with his tongue, in the old envelope legibly addressed to himself some months before, Hamp Yarbrough blushed. Never before, in his twenty-eight years of life, had he ever felt occasion to fear an imputation of lack of personal courage. But some blessed influence behind his own shame-facedness carried him through to the irretrievable end of his backdown. He handed the envelope to little Billy Gwin, and his manner was even comical in its embarrassment.

"Give it to Dave, Billy," he muttered, and when the boy

disappeared, unconscious that he was the bearer of a flag of truce, Hamp Yarbrough was leaning listlessly against Sol's shoulder, his elbows on the saddle, the picture of a man who had just done an unworthy thing.

A broad bar of sunlight shone through the trees and fell across the road over Hamp Yarbrough and Sol. After a time its cheery brightness seemed to bring rightful understanding of what he had done to Hamp, for when at last he swung himself into the saddle his face had grown calm and content. And as he, too, disappeared around the leafy bend of the road, his lank figure swaying in perfect rhythm with Sol's spirited gallop. Hamp Yarbrough was softly singing in a fair baritone this strange and entirely inappropriate refrain;

Did you ever see a gin-sling made out o' brandy?
Johnny, come alango, hey?

For some reason the boisterous old chorus, as Yarbrough sang it, had something of the gentleness and peace of a benediction in its careless lilt. And the grace of a benediction was in Hamp Yarbrough's heart as he rode towards Clayton.



THE GHOST OF THE SWAMP*

BY A. G. CANFIELD

Some one has said that the swamps of the South are its ghosts. They are, at any rate, fit dwelling-places for ghosts if dismalness and unwholesomeness can make them so.

It is a mixed question, among people intimate with ghosts and versed in their manners and customs, why a ghost that was a sensible person in life should, after death, choose such uncomfortable places of residence as damp, mouldy churchyards, windy ruins, and the like. It is well known, however, to the above-mentioned ghost fanciers that they do particularly affect such haunts, and it must be allowed that nothing could be found to suit them better than a Southern swamp.

A great swamp is one of the dreariest scenes the eye of man ever rested on. Desolation covers it as with a pall. Even at noon-tide, semi-darkness and deathly silence reign there—darkness and silence so weird and unnatural that an owl's hoot or vulture's hoarse croak break as startlingly on the ear as the crack of a pistol shot.

Every tree is draped thick with funereal wreaths of Spanish moss; every log and stump lies rotting in the pestilential damp; every breath of air, every drop of water teems with malaria. It is the paradise of the serpent and the saurian, of all noxious and deadly things—humanity has no business there.

In just such a swamp I had the evil hap to lose myself towards the close of a winter's day in the fifties. I was a stranger, visiting an old college mate, and had been invited to join the gentlemen of the vicinity in a deer-hunt. Being a novice, I was placed at a "stand" and told to remain there until the game was driven past me.

I had not been stationed long before a fat buck dashed by. He came and was gone like a flash—nevertheless, I banged away with a glorious disregard, alike, of the improbability of

*This thrilling story has been selected as the best in the competition and the prize has been awarded to its author. Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

hitting the deer and of the insecurity of my own seat on horseback. I was reminded of the latter by finding myself promptly deposited on the oozy soil while my horse, with a contemptuous fling of his heels within an inch of my right ear, galloped away.

Here was a pleasant predicament—alone and on foot in the middle of this hideous swamp! I had no horn to blow, and could not have blown one if I had it; but as a substitute shouted until I was hoarse. Distant calls, or the echoes of my own voice came back from every direction, but in vain I waited and waited—nobody came. Losing patience, I was foolish enough to leave the spot where I had been placed and set about trying to find my own way out of the swamp.

I looked round. There was no lack of paths to follow, but the difficulty was that there were too many of them, as tracks of strayed cattle and wild hogs crossed and recrossed each other in bewildering plenty. I chose one hap-hazard, but it only wound round and round and at last landed me again at the starting point. I followed another, and it vanished in a hollow tree. A third ended in a mud hole. In short, although I was as ignorant of woodcraft as a town-bred baby, it did not take long to convince me that I was hopelessly lost.

On I floundered, wading through departed generations of rotting leaves, sinking mid-leg in slush, or stumbling over cypress knees and breaking my own. It was now quite dark, and I was about giving up in despair, and looking round for the dryest spot to be found on which to deposit my weary body until morning, when I caught a glimmer of light through the trees.

"Humph!" said I, "this is pleasant!—wandering about this beastly swamp in company with a Jack-o'-lantern!"

But the flame burned too steadily for a marsh-light. Could I reach it, I wondered, without breaking my neck over logs and stumps, or pitching head-foremost into some slimy bayou where I should infallibly furnish a supper for a dozen or so of hungry alligators?

Advancing cautiously, I drew nearer the light which grew larger and brighter, and shone red through the trees, as though seemingly from a large fire. Who could have kindled it? Surely no human being could be living in the heart of this pestilential jungle! I crept forward to the edge of a

small clearing, popped my head round an intervening tree, and gazed upon—blank darkness!

A dilapidated log-cabin stood in the centre of the clearing, but where had the light vanished? I rubbed my eyes and stared again—not a twinkle was visible. Only a minute since it stretched in a red line to my very feet, now darkness reigned supreme.

Taking at last my courage in both hands I entered the cabin. It was in the last stages of dilapidation; the chinking had fallen from between the logs; the roof was partly gone, and the absence of anything like furniture showed that it had been unoccupied for a long time. Then who could have kindled that fire?

Lighting a match I examined the fireplace. Heaps of ashes caked with mould lay on the hearth, but not even a charred stick nor a sign of recent fire was visible. I gave up trying to solve the riddle, and set about making myself as comfortable as circumstances would permit. With the boards that had fallen from the roof and some dry branches picked up outside I kindled a fire, but there was small store of fuel wherewith to fight the cold and darkness of a long winter's night. However, grumbling would not mend matters so I speedily resolved to make the best of it.

I reloaded my rifle, and then sat down on the ground close beside the hearth and leaning my back against the logs prepared to doze and watch alternately till daylight. It was not long before I lost myself in thoughts of my late companions; wondered if they were looking for me, wondered if they would find me in the morning, or if I was doomed to pass the remainder of my life in this dismal swamp, dozed, woke up, dozed again, and finally went fast asleep.

When I awoke it was with the feeling that I was shut up in an iceberg. Deadly cold palsied my limbs, froze my blood, and clogged the very beating of my heart. Yet the fire was not out, though it had burned down to a bed of hot live coals and I sat close beside it.

With an effort, like that with which we cast off the oppression of a nightmare, I seized what remained of the fuel and heaped it on the fire. I had no thought then of sparing it, for I felt that unless this fearful cold was overcome I must quickly perish.

The dry wood blazed up brightly, and as I cowered shiver-

ing over it, I thought I felt a touch on my shoulder. Startled, I looked around, but saw nothing. It must have been fancy, yet surely it felt very much like a heavy hand laid on me. As nothing further occurred, I sat down again in front of the fire.

Good God ! what was that ?

Distinctly, distinctly, I felt the clutch of a hand on my shoulder. It felt exactly as if somebody in a violent passion had seized me for the purpose of shaking the life out of me. With an exclamation I sprang to my feet prepared to grapple with my assailant. There was nothing to be seen.

I stirred the fire to a brighter blaze and scanned every corner of the room, plainly visible in the strong light, but there was absolutely nothing ! With a determined effort at composure, I set my teeth and clinched my hands, and strove with all my might to control the childish terror that possessed me. I even stamped my foot to convince myself that I was awake. Then I strode up and down the floor, and as I walked, another step kept pace with mine, and a touch from a clammy hand, now here, now there, showed that my invisible companion was close beside me.

I felt as if I should soon go mad with the unspeakable horror of hearing and feeling that some sentient thing was near me, yet, in that bright light, and in spite of all my efforts to see—nothing !

It would not be half as bad in the dark, I thought, for then I could believe this haunting thing was something real, tangible, anything; no matter how dangerous and deadly, so it were *real*. I was soon to prove the fallacy of this notion. The fire had been gradually dying down, and now with one last expiring flash, went out. As the light diminished, I cowered closer to the flame, and, crouched on the ground at one end of the hearth, tried to screw up my courage to meet whatever should happen next.

Minutes passed—they seemed to me hours. The room was now densely dark, and I could not hear the slightest sound, yet, all at once it struck me that some one was re-kindling the fire. A faint glow came from the dead ashes into which my last piece of wood had resolved itself; and, as I watched the spot breathlessly, the tiny flame broadened and brightened until the same strong red light I had seen from the outside, diffused itself over the mouldering walls and ceiling of the cabin. And now too a sensible heat displaced

the chill, clinging damp, and I saw that the fireplace was piled high with substantial logs. If at this time the flame had burned blue and emitted a strong odor of sulphur, I should not have been surprised. *That* would have been in keeping with the circumstances; but here was a good honest fire that any chilled wayfarer might have been glad to warm his limbs at, with nothing ghostly about it. Who had kindled it?

But now as I gazed, with eyes wide open, at the opposite side of the hearth, I saw an old, old man sitting in a big splint-bottomed chair. He leaned forward, his clasped hands resting on the top of a thick stick, gazing intently at the fire, and seemingly unconscious of my presence. I had, therefore, an opportunity to observe him closely. His vast frame showed that he must once have possessed a giant's strength. A thick mat of snow-white wool showed in startling contrast to a face, as black as ebony and seamed with countless wrinkles, across which a long white scar cut from the left temple across the nose to the lobe of the right ear.

He was dressed in a patched and ragged suit of homespun, the trouser-legs hanging in fringes round his bare feet, and in a belt of undressed deerskin hung a long knife, its naked blade shining keen and cruel in the firelight.

"A runaway negro," I thought, "hiding in the swamp and housing in this shanty at night because it is one degree better than the swamp outside. He looks rather an uncanny customer, but I have my gun, and, after all, why should he wish to harm me? If he has been long in this horrible place, he ought to be glad to see even a white man's face."

Here, it struck me that the appearance of the cabin had unaccountably changed. I could see no open cracks in the walls; the roof was apparently whole; in one corner a bed of dried moss was piled, in another stood a rude bench on which were arranged a tin cup and plate, a skillet and an iron pot. How and when in the name of goodness had these things got here? for not a sound had broken the deathly stillness for an hour. Now, somehow or other, I was mightily cheered and encouraged by the genial warmth and light of the fire and the homely look of the room, unaccountable as the transformation was, and still more by the presence of a human being in this ghastly solitude. All my ghostly terror vanished; and seeing that the old man was still gazing at the

fire and taking no notice of me, I thought I would rouse him from his meditations and satisfy my curiosity as to these strange happenings.

"Hallo, old man," I exclaimed, loudly and cheerily, "who the deuce are you, and where did you and your fire and furniture spring from all at once?"

The apparition in the big chair slowly straightened itself, and still leaning one hand on the stick, turned his eyes full on my face.

Never until my dying day shall I forget that look! It was not alone the deadly malignity, the fiery hate, the almost maniacal ferocity flaming in those sunken eyes that froze my blood and made me shiver from head to foot. I had faced calmly many a greater danger than could threaten me from a weak old man; I could have met the spring of a tiger without that utter sinking of the spirit, that palsy of the nerves which now overcame me. There was a devilish spell in that gaze that struck the strength from my arm and the manhood from my heart. I was afraid; yes, I was most horribly afraid of that poor, old negro.

Never once did I think of my gun; in fact, I never once thought of defending myself, but simply cowered before him like a terror-stricken child.

Slowly he rose, leaning on his stick; slowly his great height towered up till it seemed to me his head touched the rafters; slowly he crossed the room, drawing nearer and nearer to me, while I sat motionless, spellbound by the baleful fascination of those glaring eyes. He bent over me; an icy breath stirred my hair; cold, clammy fingers clasped my throat, pressing—pressing—pressing, until my tongue lolled from my mouth; my eyes seemed starting from my head, and blood burst from my ears and nostrils. Then sensation left me—I was as one dead.

When consciousness returned to me daylight was creeping into the old cabin, now empty and dilapidated as when I had first seen it. Not a sign remained of last night's vision, not even of the terrible throttling I had received. It all seemed like a dreadful dream. I was in sufficiently bad plight, however. My eyes and skin burned with incipient fever, every bone in me ached and my head worst of all. I was so weakened by fasting, the oppressiveness of the air, and the fearful night I had passed that I felt utterly incapable of exertion,

and could only wait in pain and stupor until some one came to my relief.

It was not until afternoon, however, that I was found. All efforts to follow my devious wanderings had failed, and my friends were forced to send to a distant plantation for bloodhounds to track me. But late as my deliverance came I hailed it with a thankful heart, for I fully believed that I should not survive another night in that cabin, and, as it was, I had a pretty sharp attack of fever.

When I was convalescent my host said to me one day:

"Pardon my curiosity, but you said some such queer things in your delirium that I want to ask you what really happened to you in old Goliath's cabin."

"Goliath! Is that his name? Well, it suits him."

"Suits whom?" asked my friend, with an odd look at me.

"The man I saw in the cabin that night, to be sure." And therewith I related my adventures. When I had finished my host said, thoughtfully:

"Strange things do happen sometimes, even in this prosaic age—things inexplicable by any rule of common sense or reason. You cannot have dreamed this, and it is simply impossible that you can ever have seen or heard of the man you describe. Yet there can be no doubt as to his identity. The scar across the face would alone settle that, but your description is in every point singularly exact. Do you know that you have seen a ghost?"

"Ghost! Nonsense! Maniac if you will—that he is, I believe, but his fingers were quite too substantial for a ghost. Ur—r—r! I can feel them now, choking the life out of me!"

"Yet the fingers left no mark on your throat."

"No; that is the strangest part of it. But ghosts, I have always heard, are impalpable. How could a ghost's hands throttle a man?"

"Well, whatever it may have been—dream or vision, visitant from another world, or psychic mystery of this one—the fact remains that the man you saw has been dead for twenty years. He was a noted desperado and runaway, set every plantation-law at defiance, and always evaded punishment by running off to the swamp. He spent most of his life there, and some years before his death he became insane; no doubt from the ghastly solitude in which he lived. Fancy the brute strength of a gorilla joined to a maniac's violence

and you can form some idea of what a terror he became. It was a simple matter of necessity to destroy him, for such were his cunning and ferocity that to take him alive was impossible. But it was not until he had killed or desperately wounded several of his assailants that he fell riddled with buckshot on the door-sill of his cabin. He was buried close by, and the negroes have ever since declared that his ghost haunts it. Freedom and five thousand dollars to boot would not tempt one of them to go near the place in broad daylight, and if compelled to pass a night there, the unwilling sojourner would be as crazy as Goliath himself before morning. But I think, on the whole, it was lucky for you that you encountered him in the spirit instead of the flesh for, so great was his hatred of a white man, that he would no doubt have torn you to pieces."

I pondered long and seriously over my friend's story, and finally accepted his theory; partly, perhaps, because it soothed my wounded vanity and sore sense of shame at the want of courage I had shown throughout that terrible night.

At any rate I was, and am now, convinced that my antagonist was no mere mortal like myself, but a veritable ghost—the ghost of the swamp.



HIS IDEAL*

BY MATHILDE SERAO.

Laura, standing erect beside a small table, with her head bent, was absorbed with the many buttons on her glove; a cloak embroidered with gold lay thrown over the back of a chair; a large satin fan, red on the one side and black and yellow on the other, lay half open on the table. Laura's long-trained dress was of black brocade; the low-cut bodice was finished with a large bunch of red and yellow roses, and a spray of red and yellow flowers ornamented her brown hair which was coiled loosely at the nape of her neck. Cesare entered without making a sound, looked at her a moment considering what he should say, and at last said, "Good evening, Signora."

She did not start. She turned, smiled, adjusted her glove and asked: "Is that you, Sanseverino?"

"The question is a singular one."

"Content yourself with it. I have spared you one which might be impertinent."

"Countess, to-night be a——"

"Phenomenon, is that not it?"

"Of goodness. A new experience. You spare me an impertinence; you are indulgent to me! Some horrible disaster threatens me surely!"

"Who knows?"

"I prefer the impertinence, Countess. I have already guessed it. You were about to say to me: 'Why have you come here?'"

"You guess too much, Sanseverino; it is a dangerous science."

"Only for me. I come here——"

"To see me, because you are in love with me. I know the burden of the song."

Sanseverino turned pale, notwithstanding his self-possession. He stroked his well-trimmed moustache nervously.

* Translated from the Italian, by Mrs. William Sharp, for Short Stories. Copyrighted.

"Exactly," he then said; "but I would not have said so. You would not believe it, Countess, but I have succeeded in becoming a man of spirit in your presence."

"The merit is mine, Sanseverino."

His eyes clouded, but pride enabled him to smile ironically.

"Whatever there may be of good in me, or of happiness in my life, owes its origin to you, Countess," he replied, with a very low bow.

"Excellent; that is a graceful compliment, which is the finest of those which we shall hear shortly at the theatre."

"Are you really going to the theatre?" he said, as though waking from a dream. "Why do you go there?"

"To weary myself among a lot of people."

"Weary yourself with me then. The proposal is egotistic; I do not deny it. But I will multiply myself so that you may be as much bored with me as at the theatre. If you wish I will open the piano and I will play you the most solemn, the most beautiful of the melodies of *Lohengrin* that you should have listened to at San Carlo. I will speak to you of lace, of love affairs, of excursions, of ribbon, as your friend Evelina would do. I will make love to you stupidly as George, Arthur, Adolphus or Richard might do to you. Then, after a little interval, I will feign to come myself to pay you a visit and will say to you all that I would say——"

"I prefer what you would not say to me."

"A sad truth, indeed," he answered in a deep tone.

There was silence for a minute. An unwonted occurrence, the countess was thinking. But she shook herself: "And the pit? We shall have no pit! Who will gossip?" she asked.

"What does gossip say of us?"

"Oh, a very vulgar thing, Sanseverino. That you love me and that I don't love you."

"And is the reason added, beautiful Countess?"

"No, it gives no reasons, because there are none. One loves without reasons, and one fails to love also without a reason. Love and indifference resemble one another."

"You prefer a monstrous saying," he said, placidly.

"I shall reach the theatre late," she murmured, impatiently.

"It is barely nine o'clock. It is ignobly early. Who is

twice a countess and thrice a marchioness, as you are, cannot go to the theatre at this hour. I would not dare to accompany you."

"Would it give you pleasure to accompany me there?" she inquired, her eyes ashine with vanity.

"Immense pleasure," he murmured, reading her wicked idea, "in spite of the whisper of compassion which I shall excite in your famous pit, countess. I am certain, you see," and his voice trembled with anger, "that it will pity me."

She answered nothing. After a pause she asked him:

"Were you at the ball in the Della Mana's house?"

"I was there."

"Did you await me fruitlessly?" she continued, gracefully fluttering her fan.

"I did."

"I sent to say that I was ill. Did you believe it? It was not true. My dress, when it arrived from Paris, was a masterpiece of ugliness."

"That of this evening is odious."

"Do you think so? Yet you should prefer these flowers of passion's color. Do they not everywhere preach aloud: "Love, love! passion, passion?"

"But not artificial as your flowers, countess; as the false color of your ribbons, as the false torquoise of your fan, as yourself——"

"Eh!" she exclaimed, turning rapidly round.

"Your pardon. I have made a slip. . . . My head is a little confused. Here there is a penetrating perfume which seizes my nerves."

"It is well," she approved with her head, slowly swaying her fan.

"I have made a mistake; I have offended you. You are not false; you are very loyal. You have promised me nothing, and have given me nothing. You have my congratulations, Countess Laura; you possess character. A character of indifference, of apathy if you will, added to a just proportion of vanity. Beautiful character. I admire it."

"Thanks; it is all one to me. If you wish, I will remain here till midnight. You divert me also here."

"What can I do to give you pleasure, Laura?"

"It seems to me that to call me by my name, . . . " she said slowly and coldly, looking fixedly at him with her grey eyes.

"I will call you by whatever name will give you pleasure, Countess Mormile."

" . . . I do not know. . . . I do not know . . . but there must be a way. I will find it."

"And you will tell me?"

"Perhaps. Would it please you to see my tears?"

"I would not see them," said Sanseverino, lowering his head.

"Bah!" she said, shrugging her shoulders, and she rose to take her cloak.

They descended the broad staircase arm in arm, silent, without looking at one another. At the door of the carriage he made her a very low bow. Laura smiled. "Shall I see you later at the theatre, Sanseverino?"

"What to do?"

"What everyone does."

"No. I am going to play at the Club."

"In order to distract yourself?"

"Not at all. Everything is futile, everything. Good evening, Countess Mormile."

"Good evening, Duke Sanseverino."

High noon in September, profound silence reigned over the surrounding country. From time to time could be heard the sounds of a carriage passing on the high road. On the ground floor of a villa two or three servants slept on the benches in the anteroom, a maid stitched near a window, and the kitchen boy rubbed silver-plate in the kitchen. Countess Laura disliked any disturbing sounds in the country. She herself was in her favorite room, which was part boudoir, part verandah and in part green-house, where the soft curtains moderated the light, the west wind visited gently, a little fountain of water refreshed the air, and the eyes were gratified by the autumnal flowers. Countess Laura, robed in white cashmere and cloudy white lace, with a white rose on her breast and in her hair, rocked herself in an American arm-chair.

"I wished to tell you, Sanseverino," she continued in her seductive low-toned voice, "that I shall remain at Capodimonte till the end of October."

"So late? And yet you do not like the country; you never have liked it."

"Does it seem so to you? I scarcely know if I like it now or not. The place attracts me, soothes me. The city must be horrible just now, scorched with the sun, smothered in dust, full of vulgar people, and full of noise. How stifling it must be down there. When I stand on the terrace in the evening I seem to see Naples smoking like a great steam-engine. And your Sorrento, how did you leave it?"

"Beautiful and charming; all your circle is there; everyone asks why you are missing."

"Have you asked also?"

"I dare ask nothing more—you know it. It is your friends. They make comments, suggestions——"

"What do they say?"

"I can never repeat it."

"Certainly, you will tell me."

"By command?"

"By command."

"They say you have a lover?"

"Do you believe that I have a lover?" she asked, looking steadily at him with a strange expression.

He felt as if a cold shiver passed through his bones and answered:

"I do not believe it."

"And why?"

Sanseverino was silent. She took a rose from a small basket which she had at her side and threw it to him. He caught it and smelt it lingeringly, while she watched observantly. Had he kissed the flower or only inhaled its perfume?

"Tell me, Sanseverino, at Sorrento did you often think of Naples?"

"Need you ask, Countess?"

"Of Capodimonte?"

"Of Capodimonte?"

"I mean of me," she concluded in a mournful voice, reddening slightly.

He looked at her in surprise. But she did not give him time to answer. "I read the other day a mysterious word in a mysterious book. The word is *Ideal*. Do not smile; I knew it before, but I did not well understand what it meant. The Ideal is the passing of the cloud, is it not? It is the music which we have in our minds? It is the picture painted in our imagination? It is the adored? It is all this, is it not?"

"All that, and still more, my lady."

"O, my friend! you must have had and have loved an ideal. Tell me what it is."

"I cannot tell you."

"And why not? perhaps you do not love me?" she exclaimed with shining eyes.

"Yes; but I will not tell you my ideal."

"Very well, do not tell me; I know it. I have guessed it; my heart has grown prophetic. Your ideal is a woman; that woman who loves you. Console yourself and thank the Madonna. The ideal lives; I love you, Cesare."

"Do not jest, Laura."

"I do not jest. I wish you well."

"You deceive yourself, perhaps."

"I do not deceive myself."

He grew pale and paler. The corners of his lips trembled visibly.

"I conjure you, Laura, tell no untruths! Remain beautiful, seductive—but indifferent, distant, unattainable! If you wish me to adore you, tell me you do not love me."

"I do not understand you, Cesare; you are mad. I know that I love you."

"Farewell, Laura."

"Surely you are not going?"

"I go; farewell."

"Cesare, Cesare!"

She threw the balcony door wide open. The brilliant light dazzled her; she leant over the railing and cried to him:

"For so long a time, Cesare! From the first, from the first moment."

"So much the worse," he said bowing his head. And he was lost to her sight by the turn of the road.



THE LAST CLASS*

BY ALPHONSE DAUDET

"On the morning of which I speak, I was very late in starting to school, and was in great fear of being scolded, since Monsieur Hamel had said that he would ask us about the participles, and I didn't know a single word. For a moment the thought came to me to play truant and take my way across the fields.

"The day was so warm, so clear! One could hear the blackbirds whistling on the edge of the wood, and the Prussians drilling in the meadow Rippert. All this was more attractive to me than the rule of the participles, but I had strength to resist, and ran swiftly toward the school.

"In passing before the town hall, I saw that some people were standing near the iron railing surrounding the bulletin board. For two years, all our bad news—lost battles, requisitions, orders of the authorities—had been blazoned there; and as I passed without stopping I thought: what can it be now?

"Then, as I ran across the square, the blacksmith Wachter, who, with his apprentice, was occupied in reading the placard, cried out to me:

"'Do not be in such haste, little one? you will get to school soon enough.'

"I thought he was making fun of me, and I ran all breathless into Monsieur Hamel's little court. Usually, at the commencement of school, there was a loud noise which could be heard even upon the street; desks opened, closed, lessons were repeated aloud in concert (stopping up the ears in order to learn better), and the master's ruler rapped on the table as if to say:

"'A little more quiet, please!'

"I counted on all this uproar in order to reach my seat without being noticed; but just this very day all was tranquil as a Sabbath morn. Through the open window, I saw my comrades already ranged in their places, and Monsieur Hamel

* Translated from the French, by Linda M. Duval, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

walking up and down with his dreaded iron ruler under his arm. I had to open the door and enter in the midst of this unusual silence. You wonder if I blushed or was afraid? Not at all. Monsieur Hamel looked at me without anger and said very gently:

"Go quickly to your place, my little Franz; we were about to begin without you."

"I climbed to the bench and seated myself at once at my desk. Then for the first time, a little recovered from my fright, I noticed that our master wore his handsome green redingote, his fine white frill and his embroidered black silk cap, which he never put on save on inspection days, or at the distribution of the prizes. The whole class seemed unusually silent and grave. But that which surprised me most was to see the people of the village, silent as we, seated on the long-unused benches at the further end of the room. ~~Old~~ Hauser, with his three-cornered hat, the aged Mayor, the decrepit postman and many other personages besides.

"Every one there seemed sad, and Hauser had brought forward an old alphabet, dog-eared and stained, which he held wide open on his knees, with his big spectacles laid across its pages.

"While I was gazing in astonishment on all this, Monsieur Hamel had mounted his chair, and, in the same sweet, grave voice with which he had received me, said:

"Children, this is our last class. The order has come from Berlin that nothing but German shall be taught henceforth in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new master will arrive to-morrow. To-day is your last lesson in French. I beg you be very attentive."

"These few words overwhelmed me. Oh, the wretches! This was what they had posted up before the town hall.

"My last lesson in French, and I scarcely knew how to write. Now I would never learn. I must stop here. How I wished for the days that I had lost, the lessons missed in order to hunt bird's nests or to go sliding on the Saar. My books, which a few moments before I had found so tedious, so heavy to carry—my grammar, my sacred history—seemed now like old friends from whom it was sad to part. And Monsieur Hamel! The thought that he was going away; that I should never see him again, made me forget my floggings and the blows of the terrible ruler.

"Poor man!

"It was in honor of this last class that he had donned his Sunday attire, and now I understood why the village people had come to seat themselves on the benches at the end of the room. This action seemed to say that they were sorry that they had not come oftener to visit this school. It was also like an expression of thanks to our master for his forty years of faithful service, and to pay their respects to the country which was about to retire.

"I had just reached this point in my reflections when I heard my name called. It was my turn to recite. What would I not have given to be able to say the whole of the famous rule of the participles, very loud, very clear, without one fault. But I became confused at the first words, and there I stood, balancing myself against my seat, my heart bursting, not daring to lift my head. I heard Monsieur Hamel saying:

"'I will not scold you, my little Franz, you are already punished enough.'

"'It is the same with all of us. Every day we have said: Bah! I have time enough. I will learn to-morrow. And now see what has happened. Ah! it has been the great misfortune of our Alsace to put off instruction until to-morrow. Now these people are right when they say to you: What! you pretended to be French, and you do not even know how to speak and write your own language! . . . In all this, my poor Franz, you are not most culpable. We also deserve reproach from you.

"'Your parents have not insisted enough upon having you taught. They liked better to send you to work in the fields, or to have you spin in the factories in order to earn one sou the more. And I, have I no reason to reproach myself?

"'Have I not often had you water my garden instead of working? And when I wished to go trout-fishing, did I not give you a holiday?' . . .

"Then, from one thing to another, Monsieur Hamel began to speak of the French language, saying that it was the most beautiful language in the world, the purest, the most expressive, which we must preserve among ourselves and never forget, since so long as an enslaved people retain their language, they hold the key to their prison.* Then he took

* "If one keep his native tongue, he holds the key which shall deliver him from his chains."—*F. Mistral*.

a grammar and read to us our lesson. I was astonished that I understood so well. All that he said seemed to me easy, clear. I believe I had never before given such attention, and that he had never before been so patient in his explanations. It seemed as if before his departure the poor man wanted to give us all his knowledge, to beat it all into our heads at a single blow.

"The lesson finished, we began to write. For this day, Monsieur had prepared new copies written in a beautiful round hand: *France, Alsace. France, Alsace.* These were like the little flags which floated all around the class, suspended from each desk by a pin. It was interesting to see how each one applied himself to the task, and what silence was preserved! Not a sound, save the scratching of the pens on the paper. Once the maybugs flew in the window, but no one paid any attention to them, not even the little ones who were busy making their up and down strokes, devotedly, conscientiously, as if this, too, were French. Under the eaves the pigeons were cooing softly, and I said to myself as I listened:

" 'Will they make them sing in German, too? ' "

"From time to time, as I lifted my eyes from the page, I saw Monsieur Hamel motionless in his chair, fixing in his memory the objects around him, as if he wished to carry away in his mind a picture of his little school.

"Think of it? For forty years, he had been there in the same place, with his court and his little class before him. The benches, the desks were rubbed shiny by usage; the walnut trees of the court had grown large, and the hop-vine which he himself had planted, entwined the windows even to the roof. What heart-break for the poor man to leave all these things, and to hear his sister's footsteps in the room above, preparing for their departure!

"For they were to go the following day, to leave their native land forever.

"Nevertheless he had the courage to carry on the class to the very end. After writing, came history, then the little ones chanted their *ba, be, bi, bo, bu.* At the other end of the room, old Hauser had put on his spectacles, and, holding his book in both hands, spelled out the alphabet with them. One could see that he, too, was trying to do his best; his voice trembled with emotion, and it was so comical to hear him

that we scarcely knew whether to cry or laugh.

Ah! I shall never forget this last class. . .

"Suddenly the cathedral clock struck twelve, then came the Angelus. At the same moment, the trumpets of the Prussians, who were returning from the drill, sounded shrilly under our windows. . .

Monsieur Hamel, very pale, rose from his chair.

Never had he seemed to me so grand.

"'Friends,' he said, 'my friends, I . . . I . . .'

"But something choked his utterance. He could not complete his sentence. Then he turned to the blackboard, took a piece of chalk, and, summoning all his strength, wrote in large letters:

"Vive la France!"

"There he stood, leaning his head against the wall and without speaking, signed to us:

"'All is ended. . . Go!'"



ETCHING: AN EPISODE OF GETTYSBURG*

BY W. R. RATHVON.

The little train of four stuffy red cars pulled out of the dingy shed with a snort. Since the battle, two weeks before, everything that was of Gettysburg had acquired a national importance, and of all things animate or inanimate that pertain to an inland townlet, is not the daily train, with its cinders and smoke, the most important? Hence the snort.

Every coach was crowded—convalescents returning to their homes in stained and draggled blue; spruce young officers on furlough; hospital attendants on special duty; relic hunters returning laden, and here and there a black-robed figure that told all too plainly of the loss of some one near and dear.

Jake Gumpf, the sleeping, red-faced "Pennsylvania dutchman" who filled the front seat near the rusty stove, was on his way to his home in Lancaster, where he kept a typical Pennsylvania beer saloon. He had spent the last three days in relic hunting, on the field of Gettysburg, and as guest of his brother Henry, who had lived in the town since childhood, and, up to the time of the battle, had found it hard enough to earn butter for the family bread, at his trade of wood-turner. But now, as Jake put it, "Henner vas choost coining money, making rellicts of dot baddlefield."

That Jake was not returning empty-handed, the brown-paper package under his seat was very much in evidence. Doubtless it held the usual jumble of broken bayonet-scarbards, belt-buckles, flattened bullets, and other like mementoes of the battle, that the average relic hunter carried home on each outgoing train. So, at least, thought the fair young widow who sat behind him and across the narrow aisle.

Of all the passengers she seemed the least disturbed by the July heat and dust; yet she, too, was growing drowsy as her gaze became fastened on the shapeless parcel, on the floor, between the snoring Jake's clumsy feet. But she shook off all thought of slumber as a sharp turn in the road jolted

*The story of a daring deed. Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

the car and broke the light string that held the brown-paper bundle intact.

To her horror, instead of the expected medley of relics, there rolled out upon the bare floor, two eight-inch shells, more dangerous than rattlesnakes, loaded and primed, as their bright caps showed them to be. Their explosion meant death to all in that car, perhaps to all on the train! Apparently no one but herself had seen the deadly missiles. The next turn in the track would roll them together and an explosion was inevitable unless some brave soul should instantly throw them from the train.

She had but little left to live for—why should not she—— To think was to act; and, with a womanly shriek, she seized the black shells one in each hand, and, as though they weighed but ounces, hurled them through the open window, far from the flying train.

In a moment the passengers had realized the heroism of the action and hastened to surround her.

The noise of their excitement and praise awoke the sleeping Jake; and just as the indignant crowd was about to turn upon him, he stooped over, looked under his seat, and then facing his fellow travellers, as if to ask what it was all about, said to the brakeman:

"Vere vas dose wooden boom-shells vat I had made for my saloon window?"



AUNT HESTER*

BY PAULINE SHACKLEFORD COLYAR

Having a day off from business, I determined upon a jaunt to the country; so, mounting good old Dapple, I started off when the sun was just peeping above the distant tree tops.

After a while we reached a hill, denuded of trees, whose summit was crowned by a quaint log cabin, with the soft gray smoke from its mud-daubed chimney rising in graceful spirals and floating into the purple haze beyond. Around the cabin was a motley group of half-clad negro girls and boys, forming a grotesque silhouette against the cloudless sky. I succeeded in getting sufficiently near to see and hear the following, before even the sleepy dogs that lay snapping at flies in the sunshine discovered my presence. An urchin as black as Erebus, whose name I afterward learned to be "*Torm*," emerged at a flying leap from the open door of the hut where he had been eating; he wiped his much-greased mouth and face upon a greasier sleeve, and his long, grimy shirt, like some dirty draggled pennon, waved briskly in his rear. After pirouetting with magical velocity, he made a bound forward, and performed sundry astounding antics, grinning impishly, and singing out gleefully the while—

My ole Mistess, an' two or three mo',
Gwine down de ribber ter jump Jim Crow,
Fust on de heel tap, an' den on de toe,
It tek er supple nigger ter do jes' so!

"You suttinly is de supplies' nigger I ever seed," said, with a peal of laughter, a middle-aged woman who sat piecing a quilt under the shed. "*Torm*" had thrown himself prone in the dust where he lay rolling about like a huge caterpillar; but feeling flattered by such unwonted praise, he sprang up with agility, gave himself a shake, and seizing the hand of a little wizen-faced piccaninny, called out encouragingly, "Come on, Pete, an' lemme show you how ter rap Juber. Stan' dis er way"—and "*Torm*" advanced one rusty black leg a little in front of the other, bent slightly forward, and began to slap his hands vigorously against his thighs, swaying himself easily from side to side—marking time with his front foot—the right one), and chanting in a low, monotonous tone, with occasional sharp accentuation,

Sif' de meal, an' gimme de hus',
Bake de bread, an' gimme de crus',

*A negro dialect sketch. Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

Eat de meat, an' gimme de bone,
Tek yo' wife, an' go 'long home,
Juber, Juber, Juber dis, an' Juber dat,
Juber killt de yaller cat.

Over and over again he said it, with wondrous rapidity—never misplacing a word—never omitting one, until from sheer exhaustion he sank upon the ground.

Just here Dapple stamped impatiently, and in a twinkling everybody was on the qui vive. The dogs made a furious onslaught, followed by the turbaned aunty, who belabored them unmercifully with a stick caught up for the purpose. The children, like a brood of young chickens with the hawk in sight, scampered of in all directions.

"Good mornin', young marster," said my dusky companion, curtseying, as the last cur limped off yelping under the house. "Hester is my name, suh," she continued. "Hester Stanley, suh."

"And do you live here, Aunt Hester?" I asked.

"Oh yes suh; Andy (my ole man), he's one ob de renters an' dis is de Stanley plantation. Won't you git down an' res' yo' se'f an' lemme git you up er little snack?" I dismounted, and she ushered me into her humble abode, bowing me to a large rocker near the door. In another moment there was a flourish of heels, an audible scuffle, and the woe-begone note of a chicken about to be executed. Aunt Hester had gone to the garden for vegetables, and during her absence I had leisure to observe the photographs of a beautiful dark-eyed girl and that of a handsome young man which hung in rustic frames on the rude wall. Upon her return, my first question was relative to these two.

"Why, dat's my baby—dat's Miss Leila, an' dat's Mr. Lofton. Ain't you neber hear 'bout we all?"

I felt my ignorance to be dense, but had to confess it so while she shelled the peas and bustled about getting dinner. I lighted my cigar and listened to her story.

"Enduin' ob de wah, ole Marster wuz putty much broke up an' den arterwards de niggers dey wuz sot free, an' dat finish him. Miss Leila, she ain't nuffin but er baby—de onlies' one Marster an' Mistess eber hab, an' aldough we wuck frum day in twell day out, we jes' natcherly git wusser all de time. Well, arter while we pinch and save, an' git money 'nough ter sen' Miss Leila down ter school in New Orleen. She stay two year,

an' dey ain't neber let her know how hard it ben ter live while she gone. You see, de Ku Kluckers dey runned off mos' all de han's an' de Buldoozers dey git de balance. Pear like ole Marster can't neber git uster dem new-fangle free-nigger ways.

"Miss Leila, she come back at last, an' it do my heart good to look at her. Although we too po' ter buy her many new clo'es, her an' me we go up in de attic an' rummage 'bout in dem big cedar chis'es, an' git dem ole-timey silks an' things, an' sech anudder doin's we hab er rippin' an' turnin' an' sewin.'"

Aunt Hester chuckled contentedly, glancing back over her shoulder as she sifted the meal.

"I 'member one frock in pertiklar, what she hab," she continued. "Er pale blue muslin, wid pink roses scattered ober it,—what hab dat curis short waist an' dem high-up puffy sleeves. One day she put it on an' come er trippin' out on de gallery whar her Ma an' Pa wuz, an' she tu'n all 'roun' fur 'em to see her. Dey jis' feas' dey eyes, honey, an' den she kiss 'em, an' tek ole Trip fur er walk. I knowed what wuz comin,' (in a confidential whisper), but when dem ole folks see Mr. Lofton er walkin' back wid her, you mought er knocked 'em down wid er fedder. Dey looked monstrous happy, fur sho—Miss Leila, she pick wile flowers, an' den she 'tar 'em ter pieces time she git em. But dat night when Mr. Lofton tell ole Marster how much he lub Miss Leila, eber sence dat time he meet her in New Orleen, an' axe him fur her—go 'way—chile! 'De a'r it wuz blue! Ole Marster, he fly all ter pieces. Tain't no use ter argefy wid him, sc tain't nuffin ter do but let Mr. Lofton go 'long back ter Filly-madelfy, whar he come from, an' jis' wait.

"Well, twuz 'long in July when Mr. Lofton come, an' in Augus' de yaller fever, it bre'k out. At fust twuz in de towns, but at las' we hear o' some cases out in de country, an' week arter week it come nigher, ontill it git all 'roun' we all. Day an' night men dey standin' wid guns gyardin' de roads ter keep out strangers, but still it spread. Den one day ole Marster he tuck it. Folks dey dyin' like flies, an' 'tain't well uns 'nough ter bury dem what's daid. Mistess an' me, we nuss Marster an' keep Miss Leila 'way, but in er few days, Mistess wuz down, an' den Miss Leila too. I hab ter call in Andy ter he'p nuss 'em.

"Well, ole Marster, he wuz de fust one ter go, an' Mistess ain't stay much longer. Andy, he bury 'em bofe. Miss Leila she struggle hard, an' somehow she pull thoo. But den come de hardes' time ob all. Ev'y day she follow me 'roun' de room wid her eyes, an' she ax so pitiful: 'How's Mamma an' Papa, Mammy?' 'Dey's better, honey,' I tells her. 'When kin I see 'em?' she say. 'I dunno, Miss Leila, deyd come now if dey could', I mek answer. 'But Mammy, I feel so well an' strong', she say ag'in,' an' I wuz tuck sick arter dey wuz, so dey mus' be well now.' I dunno how I mek out ter go thoo wid it, no suh, I don't. When night come, I drop on my knees an' pray fur it ter git day, an' when day bre'k, I count de time fur it ter git dark again. De buzzards dey come in droves an' circle 'roun' ober de house, an' all thoo de night de owils, dey light in de winders an' mek dem doleful soun's; an' dar wuz ole Marster's pipe layin' in de corner whar he done knock de ashes outer it de las' time, an' Mistess' wuck basket, it settin' in de same ole place, an' dem, too, done gone.

"At las' I see I can't keep Miss Leila in baid no mo', an' I done wo' myse'f out makin' scuses, so I put her in de big cheer whar she kin look out de winder. But I ain't no mo' dan got her dar, when she say, 'Now Mammy, I kin go to 'em, now. I'm so lonesome'. She try ter git up, but I fling my arms 'roun' her wais,' an' I tell her ez good ez I kin, fur cryin':

'Oh! my baby!—my po' chile! You mus' go ter dem; dey can't come no mo' ter you, an' dey won't know no mo' trouble.'"

Aunt Hester wiped her eyes with her apron, and mechanically stirred the fire. "It 'pear like I kin see it all now," she continued. "Miss Leila ain't say er word, but jes' tu'n white ez er lily an' fall in er daid faint, an' ole Trip he set by de baid whar I done laid her, an' howl.

"De feber it still rage all 'roun' us, an' no mails ain't come an' Miss Leila ain't see er white pusson sence she git well. But 'long in ovember, de fros come, an' den we hab er freeze an' dar ain't no mo' danger. Miss Leila 'pear like she done forgot how ter talk, an' set all day in one place lookin' 'way off in de distance. Things dey git from bad ter wuss, an' at las' I tell her, 'Honey, write an' tell Mr. Lofton ter come an' tek you 'way, kaze we can't go on like we is. 'I did write to him', she say, 'but I ain't got no answer, an' I don't want to live no longer. Nobody don't love me now.' 'Don't yo 'ole black Mammy lub her baby?' I ax her, an' ole

Trip he lay his haid on her knee ter 'mind her not ter furgit he's dar, too. She smile so sorrowful, an' she say (like she talkin' ter herse'f)— 'yes, jes' you an' Trip, dat's all I got lef!' An' dat dorg, suh! he got much sense ez folks. He jes' sot dar an' knock his tail on de flo', when Miss Leila say dat, 'twell it soun' lak er drum.

"Ev'y day I look for Mr. Lofton's letter, but t'aint neber come. So at las', Miss Leila, she git er place ter teach school an' me an' Andy, we tek her ter de steamboat landin' in de waggin, an' she stan' out on de gyards, an' you can't tell which one cry de mos', me, or her, or Andy. Arter she gone, ole Trip he same ez my shadder, an' one day 'bout six munt sence she lef, I hear him barkin' mighty loud, an' when I go ter de do', who you reckon I see?"

She paused impressively, with face beaming, and arms akimbo. "Bless yo' soul, honey, 'twuz Mr. Lofton, big ez life. I ain't say much, kaze I suttinly wuz outdone wid him. Well, he set dar er while, an' he say: 'I come ter see dey graves, mammy', so I go 'long wid him ter whar Andy done bury 'em, I p'int ter one ob 'em, an' I say, 'dat's ole Marster,' an' den I p'int ter de udder one, an' I say, 'dat's ole Mistess. He look at me strange, an' he ax 'Leila—whar is she?' 'Up in Nashville, teachin' school.' I tell him, kinder up-pish, fur I sholy wuz riled wid him. But befo' I know what he gwine do, he grab bofe my han's he did, suh! an' please de Lord, he wuz dat'stracted, er leetle mo', an' he'd er kissed me smack in de mouf. You Dilsy gal, come in heah wid er bresh, an' fan de flies off dis gentleman while he's eatin'" she added bursting into a loud guffah, as she called to a half-grown girl outside.

"You see, suh," she continued picking up the thread of her story. "Twuzn't his fault, kaze he say endu'in ob de feber he git de lis' ob dem what die ebry day, ter try ter hear sumpun 'bout we all; an' one time he see dat Marster, an' Mistess, an' Miss Leila, all wuz daid, an' den he lose heart, an' git on er ship an' cross ober de sea. He say he done jes' git back an' ain't neber know 'bout Miss Leila's letter, but he feel like he bleegee ter come an' see his sweetheart's grabe.

"Dey all de time beggin' me ter come up in Fillymadelfy an' stay wid 'em, but uh! huh! dat's too fur er place fur dis ole nigger—yes suh, it is.

"Dilsy, git dat bigges' bottle ob 'simmon beer.—it's monst'ous coolin' on er hot day."

THE BRIDE OF THE ICE KING*

BY DONALD G. MITCHELL.

Famous Story Series.



ANY, many years ago, there lived upon the edge of the valley of Lauterbrunnen a peasant who had a beautiful daughter by the name of Clothilde. Her hair was golden and flowed in ringlets upon a neck which would have rivalled that of the fairest statue of antiquity. Her eye was hazel and bright but with a pensive air, which if the young herdsmen of the valley looked on, only once, they never forgot in their lives.

The mother of Clothilde, who had died when she was young, came, it was said, from some foreign land; none knew of her lineage, and the

people of the valley had learned only that the peasant whose wife she became had found her lost on the mountains.

The peasant was an honest man, and mourned for the mother of Clothilde, because she had shared his labors and had lighted pleasantly the solitary path of his life. But Clothilde, though the mother died when she was young, clung ever tenderly to her memory and persisted always that she would find her again where her father had found her—upon the mountains. It was in vain they showed her the grave, where her mother lay buried, in the village churchyard.



"No," she would say, "my mother is not there." And her eyes lifted to the mountains.

*Illustrated for Short Stories by Abbey Underwood.

Yet no one thought Clothilde was crazed; not a maiden of all the village of Lauterbrunnen performed better her household cares than the beautiful Clothilde. Not one could so swiftly ply the distaff; not one could show such store of white cloth woven from the mountain flax. She planted flowers by the door of her father's cottage; she watched over all his comforts; she joined with the rest in the village balls; but, unlike all the maidens of the village, she would accept no lover.

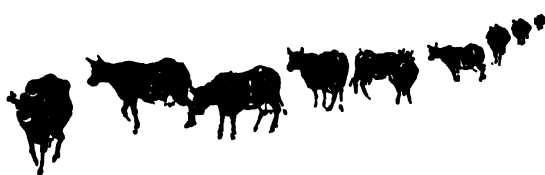
There were those who said that her smiles were all cold smiles, and that her heart was icy. But these were disappointed ones.

The father, plain peasant that he was, mourned in his heart when he thought how Clothilde was the only maiden of the village who had no lover; and he feared greatly, as the years flew swiftly over him, for the days that were to come when Clothilde would have none to watch over her and none to share her cottage home.

But the pensive-eyed Clothilde put on gaiety when she found this mood creeping over her father's thought, and cheered him with the light songs she had learned from the village girls. Yet her heart was not in the light songs, for she loved to revel in the wild, mysterious tales belonging to the mountain life. Deeper things and things more dread, than came near to the talk or to the thought of the fellow-villagers, awakened the fancy of Clothilde. Whether it was some dreamy memory of the lost mother or daily companionship with the mountains and glaciers which she saw from her father's door, certain it was that her thought went farther and wider than the thoughts of those around her.

Now the father of Clothilde had large flocks for a village

peasant. Fifty of his kids fed upon the herbage which grew upon the mountain ledges, and half a score of



dun cows came every night to his chalet from the pasture grounds which were watered by the spray of the Dust-Fall.

Many of the young villagers would have gladly won Clothilde to some token of love; but ever her quiet, pale face, as she knelt in the village church, awed them to silence;

and ever her gentle manner, as she clung to the arm of the old herdsman, her father, made them vow new vows to capture the village beauty.

In times of danger, or in times when sickness came to the chalets of the valley, Clothilde passed hither and thither on errands of mercy, and when storms threatened those who watched the kids upon the mountain slopes, she sent them food and wine and fresh store of blankets.

So the years passed, and the maidens said that Clothilde was losing the freshness that belonged to her young days. But these were jealous ones.

And the father, growing always older, grew sadder.

"Who," said the old man, "will take care of the flocks, my daughter? Who will look after the dun cows? Who will bring the winter store of fir wood from the mountains?"

Now Clothilde could answer for those things, for even the curé of the village could not see the pretty and the pious Clothilde left destitute. But it pained her heart to witness the care that lay upon her father's thought and she was willing to bestow quiet upon his parting years. Therefore on a day when she came back with the old herdsman from a village wedding, she told him that she, too, if he wished, would become a bride.

"And whom will you marry, Clothilde?" said the old man.

"Whom you choose," replied the maiden. "But she added, "he must be good else how can I be good? And he must be brave, for the dangers of the mountain life are many."

So the father and the curé consulted together, while Clothilde sang as before at her household cares; and lingered, as was her wont at evening, by the chapel of Our Lady of Snow, in view of the glaciers which rose in front of the valley.

But the father and curé could decide upon none who was



wholly worthy to be the bridegroom of Clothilde, though the people of the village were honest and not a young villager of them all but would have made for her a watchful husband and cared well for the flocks which belonged to her father's fold.

In that day, as now, village fêtes were held, in every time of Spring, at which the young mountaineers contended with each other in wrestling and in the cast of heavy boulder stones and in other mountain sports which tried their manliness and which called down the plaudits of all the village dames. The Spring and the Spring fêtes were now approaching and it was agreed between the father and curé that where all were so brave and honest, the victor in the village games should receive for reward the hand of Clothilde.

The villagers were all eager for the day which was to decide the fortunes of their valley heiress. Clothilde herself, wore no cloud upon her brow, but ever with the same serene look she busied her hands with her household cares and sang the old songs which cheered her father's heart.

The youth of the village eyed her askance and said—
“She can have no heart worth winning who is won only by a stout arm.”

And others said still—“She is icy cold and can have no heart at all!”

But the good curé said “Nay!”

And many a one from sick beds called down blessings on her.

There were mothers, too, of the village, thinking, perhaps, as mothers will, of the fifty kids and of the half score dun cows, who said—“She who is so good a daughter will make, also, a good wife!”

Among those who would gladly have sought Clothilde in marriage was a young villager of Lauterbrunnen whose name was Conrad. He was a hunter as well as a herdsman, and he knew the haunts of the chamois as well as he knew the pasture ground where fed the kids which belonged to the father of Clothilde. He had nut-brown hair and dark blue eyes and there was not a maiden in the valley, save Clothilde, but watched admiringly the proud step of the hunter Conrad. Many a time her father had spoken of the daring deeds of Conrad and had told to Clothilde the tale of the wild moun-



tain hunts which Conrad could reckon up; and how, once upon a time, when a child was lost, they had lowered the young hunter with ropes into the deep crevasses of the glacier and how in the depths of the icy cavern, he had bound the young child to his shoulder and been dragged, bruised and half dead, to the light again.

To all this Clothilde had listened with a sparkle in her eye; yet she felt not her heart warming toward Conrad as the heart of a maiden should warm toward an accepted lover.

Many and many a time, Conrad had gazed on Clothilde as she kneeled in the village church. Many and many a time, he had watched her crimson kirtle as she disappeared among the walnut trees that grew by her father's door. Many and many a time he had looked, longingly, on the ten dun cows which made up her father's flock and upon the green pasture ground where the kids counted by fifty.

Brave enough he was to climb the crags even when the ice was smooth on the narrow footway and a slip would hurl him to destruction; he had no fear of the crevasses which gaped frightfully in the paths which lead over the glaciers; he did not shudder at the thunders which the avalanches sent howling among the heights around him, and yet Conrad had never dared to approach the pensive-eyed Clothilde.

Once or twice indeed he had borne a hunter's gift of tender chamois flesh to the old man, and Clothilde, with her low voice, had said:

"My father thanks you, Conrad."

And the brave hunter, in her presence, was like a sparrow within the swoop of a falcon.

If she sang, he listened as though he dreamed. If she was silent, he gazed on the cool mountain pools.

The idle raillery of the village he could not talk to her; of love, she would not listen; of things higher, with his peasant's voice and mind, he knew not how to talk. And the mother of Conrad, a lone widow, living only in the love of her son, chid him for his silence and said:

"He who has no tongue to tell of love, can have no heart to win it."

Yet Conrad, for very lack of speech, felt his slumberous passion grow the stronger. The mountain springs which are locked longest with ice run the fiercest in Summer.

And Conrad rejoiced in the trial that was to come, where

he could speak his love in his own mountain way and conquer the heart of Clothilde with his good right arm.

Howbeit, there was many another herdsman of the valley who prepared himself joyously for the strife when the winner should receive the fifty kids and the ten dun cows and the hand of the beautiful Clothilde.

Upon the night which was before the day of the village fête, it happened that she met the brave young hunter returning from the hills with a chamois upon his shoulder. He saluted her and would have followed at respectful distance, but Clothilde beckoned his approach.

"Conrad," said she, "you will contend with the others at the fête to-morrow?"

"I will be there," said Conrad, "and, please the Blessed Virgin, I will win such prize as was never won before."

"Conrad, I know that you are brave and that you are strong; will you not be also generous? Swear to me that if you are the winner in to-morrow's sports you will not claim the reward, which my father has promised to the bravest, for a year and a day."

"You ask what is hard," said Conrad. "When the chamois is near, I draw my bow, and when my arrow is on the string how can I stay the shaft?"

"It is well for your mountain prizes, Conrad; but think you the heart of a virgin is to be won like a gazelle of the mountains?"

"Clothilde will deny me, then?" said Conrad, sadly.

"Until a year and a day are past I must deny," said the maiden; "but when the snows of another Spring are melted, and the fête has returned again, if you, Conrad, are of the same heart and will, I promise to be yours."

And Conrad touched with his lips the hand she gave him, and swore:

"By Our Lady of the Snow, for a year and a day I will make no claim to this hand of Clothilde!"

The morning was beautiful which ushered in the day of the fête. The maidens of the village were arrayed in their gayest dresses and the young herdsman of the valley had put on their choicest finery. The sports were held upon a soft bit of meadow land at the foot of the great glacier which rises in the front of Lauterbrunnen. A barrier of earth and rocks, clothed with fir trees, separated the green meadow from the

crystal mountain which gleamed above. And ever, when the sun smote hotly, the glacier streams, which murmured upon either side of the meadow, made cool the air.

All the people of the village were assembled and many a young hunter and herdsman, beside, from the plains of Interlacken or from the borders of the Brienzer-See or from the farther vale of Grindelwald.

But Conrad had no fear of these, for already, on many a day of fête, he had measured forces with them and borne off the prizes whether in wrestling or in the cast of the granite boulders. This day, he had given great care to his dress—a jerkin of neatly tanned chamois leather set off his muscular figure, and it was dressed, upon the throat and upon the front, with those rare furs of the mountains which betokened his huntman's craft.

Many a village maiden wished that day she held the place of Clothilde and that she, too, might have such champion as the brown-haired Conrad.

A rich cap of lace, worked by the village hands, was round the forehead of Clothilde and to humor the pride of the old man, her father, she had added the fairest flowers that grew by the cottage door. But fair as were the flowers, the face beneath was fairer. Many looks turned cautiously toward the bench where sat the village belle, whose fortunes hung upon the fête of the day, but her brow was calm and there, as ever, she was watchful of the comfort of her father. Half of the games had passed over indeed, before she turned a curious look upon the strife.

When the wrestlers were called, there appeared a stout herdsman from the valley of Grindelwald, who was the pride of his village and who challenged, boldly, the hunter Conrad. He was taller and seemed far stronger than Conrad, and there were those who feared greatly that a stranger would carry off the prize. But the heart of the brave hunter was fired by the sight of Clothilde, now bending an eager look upon the sports. He accepted the challenge of the stout herdsman and they grappled each other in the



mountain way. The stranger was the stronger but Conrad the more active. For a long time they struggled vainly, but the heavy herdsman grew weary. Conrad pressed him closely and soon the village rang with shouts and the champion of Grindelwald was fairly vanquished.

After this came the cast of the boulders. One after another, the younger men made their trial and the limit of each cast was marked by a willow wand and in the cleft of each wand was a fragment of ribbon, bestowed by well-wishing maidens.

Conrad, taking breath after his wrestling match, advanced composedly to his place at the head of the arena, where stood the fir saplings with the laurel wreaths. He lifted the boulder with ease and giving it a vigorous cast retired unconcerned. The little blue strip of ribbon which presently marked its face, was far in advance of the rest.

Again there was a joyous shout but the men of Grindelwald cried out loudly to their champion and he came forward. But his arm was tired and his cast was scarce even with the second of the men of Lauterbrunnen.

Again the shout rose—louder than before—and Conrad was declared, by the village umpires of the fête, to be the victor and by will of the old herdsman, to be the accepted lover of the beautiful Clothilde. They led him forward to the stand where sat the curé, between the old herdsman and his daughter.

Clothilde grew suddenly pale. Would Conrad keep his oath?

Fear may have confused him or fatigue may have forbid his utterance, but he reached forth his hand for the guerdon of the day and the token of betrothal.

Just then an Alpine horn sounded long and clear and the echoes lingered among the cliffs and in the spray of the Dust-Fall. It was the call of a new challenger. By the laws of the fête, the games were open until sunset and the new comer could not be denied.

None had seen him before.

His frame was slight but firmly knit. His habit was of the finest white wool, closed at the throat with rich, white furs, and caught together with latches of silver. His hair and beard were of a light, flaxen color, and his chamois boots were clamped and spiked with polished steel—as if he had crossed the glacier.

It was said by those, near whom he passed, that a cold current of air followed him and that his breath was frosted on his beard.

He said no word to any, but advancing, with a stately air, to the little plateau where the fir spars stood crowned with their laural garlands, he seized upon a boulder larger than any yet thrown, and cast it far beyond the mark where the blue pennant of Conrad still fluttered in the wind.

There was a stifled cry of amazement and the wonder grew greater still when the stranger, in place of putting a willow wand to mark his throw, seized upon one of the fir saplings and hurled it through the air with such precision and force, that it fixed itself in the sod within a foot of the half imbedded boulder, and rested with its laurel wreath quivering from the top.

The victor waited for no conductor, but marching straight to the bench where sat the bewildered maiden and her wonder-stricken father, bespoke them thus:—

“Fair lady, the prize is won but if, within a year and a day, Conrad can do better than this I will yield him the palm—until then, I go to my home in the mountains.”

The villagers looked on amazed. Clothilde alone was calm but silent.

The stranger had disappeared. None had noticed his approach, and his departure was as secret as his coming.

The curé muttered his prayers. The village maidens re-



called, in timid whispers, his fine figure and the rich furs that he wore and Conrad, recovering from his stupor, said never a word but paced back and forth, musingly, the length of the boulder-cast which the white-clad stranger had made.

The old man swore it was some spirit and bade Clothilde accept Conrad at once as a protector against the temptations of the Evil One. But the maiden, more than ever wedded to her visionary life by this strange apparition, dwelt upon the words of the stranger and repeating them, said to her father—

“Let Conrad wait for a twelvemonth and, if he passes the throw of the Unknown, I will be his bride.”

The sun sank beyond the hills of the Ober-Alp and with the twilight came a mystic awe over the minds of the villagers. The thoughtful Clothilde fancied the stranger some spiritual guardian—most of all, when she recalled the vow which Conrad had made and had broken. She remarked moreover, as they went toward their home, that an eagle of the Alps, long after its wonted time of day, hovered over their path and only when the cottage door was closed, soared away to the cliffs that lifted above the glaciers of Lauterbrunnen.

The old herdsman began now to regard his daughter with a strange kind of awe. He consulted long and anxiously with the good curé of the village. Could it be that the maid, so near to his heart, was leagued with the spirit-world? He recalled the time when he had first met her mother, wandering upon the mountains. Whence had she come? And was the stranger, of the festal day, of some far kindred who now sought his own? It was remembered how the mother had loved her child and had borne her in her arms often to the very edge of the glacier, and lulled Clothilde to sleep with the murmur of the deep falls of water which, in the heats of summer, make mysterious music in the heart of the ice-mountains.

It was remembered how, in girlhood, Clothilde had often wandered thither to pluck Alpine roses and was heedless always of the icy breath which came from the blue glacier-caverns. Always, too, she hung her votive garlands on the altar of Our Lady of the Snow and prayed for the pilgrims who, in winter, traversed the rude passes of the Ober-Alp.

Did the mother belong to the Genius of the Mountain? And was the daughter pledged to the Ice King?

The poor old herdsman bowed his head in prayer. The good curé whispered words of comfort. Clothilde sang as she had sung in the days that were gone, but the old man trembled at her low tones which thrilled now in his ears like the siren sounds which, they say in the Alps, go always before the roar of some great avalanche.

Yet the father's heart twined more and more round the strange, spirit-being of Clothilde. It seemed to him, more and more, that the mother's image was before him and that the mother's soul looked out from the tender eyes of Clothilde. He said now no word of marriage, but waited, with resignation, for the dread twelvemonth to pass away. And he looked with pity upon the strong-hearted Conrad who, fierce and more daring than before—as if some quick despair had given courage—scaled the steepest cliffs and brought back stores of chamois flesh, of which he laid always a portion at the door of the father of Clothilde.

It was said, too, that the young huntsman was heard at night casting boulder stones in the valley, and nerving his arm for the trial of the twelvemonth to come.

The maidens of the village eyed askance the tripping figure of Clothilde—the mothers of the young herdsmen spoke less often of the ten dun cows which fed upon her father's pasture grounds, and counted less often the fifty kids which trooped at night into her father's folds upon the mountain.

Yet ever Clothilde made her sunset walks to the chapel of Our Lady of the Snow and ever, in her place in the village church, she prayed as fervently as before.

If she lived in a spirit-world, it seemed a good spirit-world, and the crystal glory of the glacier, where no foot could go, and where her gaze loved to linger, imaged to her thought the stainless purity of angels. If the curé talked with Clothilde of the Heaven where her mother had gone—the girl simply pointed to the mountains.



Did he talk of worship and the anthems which men sang in the cathedrals of cities—

Clothilde said: "Hark to the avalanche!"

Did he talk of a good spirit which hovers ever near the faithful—

Clothilde pointed upward to where the eagle soared over the glacier above her home.

As the year passed away, mysterious rumors were spread among the villagers, and there were those who said they had seen at eventide Clothilde talking with a stranger in white, who was like the challenger of the year before. And when the winter had covered the lower hills with white, it was said that strange footprints were seen about the little chapel of Our Lady of the Snow.

Howbeit, Clothilde neglected not one of the duties which belonged to her in the household of her father, and her willing heart and hand forbade that either the kind old herdsman or the curé should speak aught ill to her, or forbid her the long mountain rambles.

The old mother of Conrad grew frightened indeed, and prayed her son to give up all thoughts of the strange Clothilde and to marry a maiden whose heart was of warmer blood and who kept no league with the Evil One. But Conrad only the more resolutely followed the bent of his will and schooled himself for the coming trial. If they spoke to him of the stranger, he vowed, with a fearful oath, that be he who he might he would dare him to sharper conflict than that of the year before.

So, at length, the month and the day drew near again. It was the early Springtime ; the wasting snows still whitened the edges of the fields which hung upon the slopes of the mountain. The meadow of the fête had lost the last traces of Winter, and a fresh, green sod with a sprinkling of daisies glittered under the dew and sunlight.



Clothilde was again robed with care, and when the old herdsman looked on her face, wreathed in the flowers she had woven out by his cottage door, he forgave her all he had thought, of her tie to the spirit world, and clasped her to his heart and called her his good—his own little Clothilde.

On the day before the fête there had been a heavy rain, and the herdsmen from the heights reported that the Winter snows were loosening and would soon come down, after which would be broad Summer and the ripening of the crops.

Scarce a villager was away from the wrestling ground. All had heard of Clothilde and of the new and strange comer who had challenged the pride of the valley and had disappeared—none knew whither.

Was Conrad again to lose his guerdon?

The games went on, with the old man, the father of Clothilde, looking on timidly and the good curé holding his accustomed place beside him. There were young herdsmen who appeared this year for the first time among the wrestlers, but the firm and tried sinews of Conrad the hunter placed him before these as he was before all others. Not so many, however, as on the year before, envied him his spirit bride. Yet none could gainsay her beauty, for this day her face was radiant with a rich glow and her complexion, relieved by the green garland she wore, would have made this village beauty the envy of a princess.

As the day's sports went on, a cool, damp breeze blew up the valley and clouds drifted over the summits of the mountains. Conrad had made himself the victor in every trial. To make his triumph still more brilliant, he had even surpassed the throw of his unknown rival of the year before. At sight of this the villagers raised one loud shout of greeting which echoed from end to end of the valley. And the brave huntsman, flushed with victory, dared boldly the stranger of the white jerkin and the silver lachets to appear and maintain his claim to Clothilde, the queen of the valley.

There was a momentary hush, broken only by the distant murmur of the Dust-Fall, and the thickening clouds drifted fast athwart the mountains.

Clothilde grew suddenly pale, though the old herdsman, her father, was wild with joy. The curé watched the growing paleness of Clothilde and saw her lift her eyes toward the head of the glacier.

"Bear away my father!" said she in a tone of quick authority. In a moment the reason was apparent. A roar, as of thunder, filled the valley; a vast mass of the glacier above had given way and its crash upon the first range of cliffs now

reached the ear. The fragments of ice and rock were now moving with frightful volume down toward the plateau.

The villagers fled, screaming.

The father of Clothilde was borne away by the curé. Clothilde, herself, was, for the moment, forgotten. The eye of Conrad was keen and his judgment rare. He saw the

avalanche approaching but he did not fly like the rest. An upper plateau and a thicket of pine trees was in the path of the avalanche—he trusted to these to avert or stay the danger.

As he watched, while the others shouted him a warning, he saw Clothilde in the arms of a white-clad stranger, who was flying toward the face of the mountain. Forgetful of peril, he rushed wildly after.

A fearful crash succeeded. The avalanche had crossed the plateau and had swept down the fir trees. The trunks splintered before it like Summer brambles. The attached rocks were hurled down in showers—immense masses of ice followed quickly after, roaring over the débris of the forest, and, with a crash that shook the valley, reached the meadow. Swift as lightning whole



acres of green sod were torn up by the wreck of the forest trees and rocks and huge, gleaming masses of cruel ice and then, more slowly and with a low murmur, like a requiem, came a flow of melting snow, covering the great plain with a mantle of white.

Poor Conrad lay buried beneath.

Those who were hindermost in the flight from the meadow of the village fête, told of the sudden coming amidst them of a stranger, all clad in silver and in white, who took Clothilde in his arms and bore her, in her flowing white robes and the garland of green in her hair, up the face of the mountain.

Certain it is that the valley of Lauterbrunnen never saw her more. The poor, old herdsman, her father, died shortly after; and his stock of fifty kids and the ten dun cows were left to the curé to buy masses for the rest of his daughter's soul.

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(See p. 321.)





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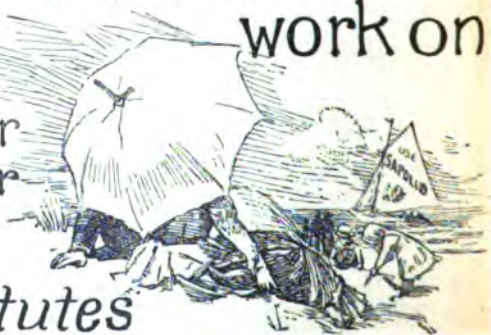


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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

Vol. XIII. No. 3. *This magazine is planned to cover the story-telling field of the world. Its selections will be of the best procurable in all the languages.* JULY, 1898



NOT long ago, there stood on the shore of life a mortal. We all saw him. Some were dazzled by his gold, some wondered at his talents, and others were enraptured by his beauty, but he alone saw himself as he was, and therefore knew what was lacking—happiness.

Years of his life were spent in trying simply to know what happiness was. Others looked on him and thought they saw happiness, the while he vainly sought it until one summer night as he sat alone by the sea, where the star-light trembled on the breast of the waters and, beyond, the steep dark hills rose out of the sea and stood clear against the sky.

Suddenly a strange red light broke out and on the distant hill stood the figure of a woman with outstretched arms—it resembled something he had seen before. He cried aloud with joy, "It is happiness: I see it, I will reach it;" and jumping up he began his terrible pilgrimage. The briars tore his clothes, the excitement made him weak, he left behind him friends, family, work, all—to reach happiness.



*Written for Short Stories and illustrated by F. Schuyler Mathews—Copyrighted.

He was growing more and more tired, and could not understand why, when one had seen happiness, such a struggle to reach it should be necessary.

At last he gained the top, exhausted and half blind with dust. He stretched out his hands and looked up—and lo, the figure in the sky was on a hill beyond, which he had not seen from below.

She stood with outstretched arms in the intoxicating light of the sky, still far, far beyond his reach.

He fell with his face to the ground and wept. But she came no nearer; so he got up again and staggered down the hill, through the opposite valley, leaving his life still further behind him, and toiled slowly up, over the rocks, through the tangled underbrush, ever upward, to where he saw happiness standing. She seemed so near that he laughed, and nearly forgot his pain—and when he reached the top and sprang forward to



grasp and keep her, she was far, far out of reach, on still another distant hill, against the heated summer sky still with outstretched arms. His head swam and he fainted.

But see! the light in the sky grows dimmer. The figure partially fades and then draws nearer to the prostrate form on the mountain top.

Her breath is the stirring night-wind that fans the dishevelled hair back from his feverish brow.

She speaks softly: "Poor humanity!" she murmurs, "and who has ever obtained happiness by seeking it? I would give thee so much, but it is a prize to be won, not a goal to be reached. Go back and do thy duty, go serve thy God, go help thy



fellow man, and thou shalt touch me and know me. Thinkest thou because I have the figure of woman I am happiness? Poor foolish humanity! Thou leavest duty to seek happiness and now, thy life being nearly wasted, dost learn the truth."

The mortal turned and looked heavenward. "Am I never to have happiness?" he asked.

"Turn thy back on the vision of happiness," answered the voice; "turn and go back towards duty, and happiness will follow thee."

He arose and went down the mountain as the new day was breaking—but he was an old man.



A FOOL'S WISDOM*

BY JAMES PAYN

I was once a junior clerk in the employment of that well-known and extensive firm, Apsley, Wellesley & Co., of Cornhill. The senior partner was a friend of my father, which gave me a better position than I should otherwise have occupied; but I may say, without vanity, that I was well worth my "salt," or at all events, my salary, which was by no means a large one. I did not shirk my duties as was the fashion of some of my fellow clerks to do, and showed myself anxious to "get on." Of course there are different ways of doing this, but when it is done without priggism, and especially not at the expense of others, I have a conviction that it generally succeeds.

Nevertheless, even at one-and-twenty, I was neither so vain nor so foolish as to set down old Apsley's favor to me to my own merits. He had taken me into his employment to oblige his old friend, very likely by no means willingly, and he was no doubt agreeably surprised to find me useful to him. "Business is business," and as a general rule (as I have since found myself) it is better not to let sentimental considerations interfere with it, if you can help it—which, however, is a pretty large if. At all events our senior partner was as civil to his young clerk as was compatible with the great gulf between us, and his carefulness to give no cause of jealousy to others. He even knew where I lodged—itself an immense stretch of interest in any member of the firm as regarded their subordinates—and had been so good as to inquire, on one occasion, whether I was comfortably located. Such affability won my heart, and, unless I had been offered a considerable rise of salary, I would not have left his employment to serve anybody.

Annie Apsley was the only daughter of the head of our firm. How well do I remember that, upon first sight of her, the question came to me so suddenly and clearly that it seemed as though some person had spoken it audibly:

"Shall you ever marry her?"

*A business man's love story.—Copyrighted.

And I am sure that my lips moved with the reply, though it may have been voiceless:

"Of course not."

Still, I fell in love with her on the instant. That was not strange, seeing that I was an impressionable young fellow, and she was as dainty and lovely a blonde maiden of eighteen as ever lived. As to the wild surmise, whether I should ever wed her, that was doubtless incited by the legendary accounts of the poor young clerks who go to altars with Lord Mayor's daughters, and I at once pronounced it a fool's phantasy. Yes: I considered the matter sedately, and my verdict against myself was one of conviction as a sentimental fool.

This conclusion was reached at the end of the quarter of an hour during which Miss Apsley was in the office, chatting with her father and Mr. Jones, the junior and managing member of the firm, while I was on duty at my desk in an adjoining room. I could not understand more than an occasional word, and the subjects of their discourse seemed trivial enough; but I could see that the girl, though familiar and affectionate toward her father, in many little bits of manner, was cold and formal in regard to Mr. Jones. My work was neglected, as I slyly eyed the pretty creature through the open doorway, until a sudden turn of her head enabled her to catch me at it. She betrayed only by a momentary blush that she was aware of me; and then I, feeling grossly impertinent, made a pretence of an errand by seizing a bunch of papers and rushing out into the warehouse.

My first recourse was to Spriggins, a clerk near me in office duties, and also my next-door neighbor in lodgings. Of course, I did not disclose to him my very wild and hopeless admiration of our chief employer's daughter. Instead, I approached her through the person of Mr. Jones, as to whom I questioned Spriggins.

"Is he a bachelor?" I asked.

"A widower, I believe," was the reply; "but nobody in this establishment appears to know much about him."

"Is he a suitor for the hand of Miss Apsley?"

"How on earth should I know?"

"But there might be rumors and surmises, you know."

"Never heard one."

"But don't you detect in his manner toward her, when they

meet in the office, that he is in love with her—and—and she with him?"

"Never noticed anything, one way or another. But, I say——"

Then he stopped, gazed hard into my face, and laughed aloud.

"Blessed if I don't believe you're spooney on Miss Apsley, first sight of her," he went on, "and jealous of Mr. Jones."

The fellow had raised his voice in this ebullition of raillery and, looking beyond him, I saw to my horror and dismay, that Miss Apsley herself had heard every word. She had come into the passage where we stood, on her way out.

"You're a fool, Ackers," Spriggins added; "You're a fool!"

Then Miss Apsley passed us, without a glance, but with an expression on her face which told more plainly than the most scornful speech could have done, that she quite agreed with my friend in ascribing foolishness to me.

It was a week later that a footman called at my lodgings one evening with a note from Mr. Apsley requesting me, "if convenient," to come to see him at once at his private residence. This was situated in a fashionable square, and though I saw little of it that night except the old gentleman's study, or snuggery, whither he descended for the interview, I was considerably impressed with its grandeur. He wore a smoking jacket, and had a comfortable, home aspect. What he wanted me for was to take a note upon some important business matter to our Mr. Jones, the manager, that night.

"I don't know where he lives," he said, "or I would not have troubled you, Ackers!"

I replied, very truthfully, that the trouble was a pleasure (for it is always a good thing to be able to oblige one's chief), and that though I only knew that Mr. Jones lived somewhere near Harton, a suburban station, I would find him if he was above ground.

"I used to know well enough where he lived," Mr. Apsley remarked, as he bowed me carelessly through the hallway; "but he moved out of town three months ago, and I have somehow forgotten the exact address. But it is close by Harton, and no doubt you will easily discover it."

Then could it be possible that there was any love affair be-

tween Mr. Jones and Miss Apsley? If he were her wooer, acceptably so or not, would there not be a sufficient intimacy between them that she would know the street and number of his suburban home? It seemed so, and for the instant I concluded that my surmise had been incorrect.

"Does he lodge or keep house?" I ventured to ask.

"I believe he keeps house," was the reply.

"Then he has a wife? I mean—am I to look for a house-keeping establishment? That is—I——" and I floundered in the deep water into which my jealous curiosity had thrown me.

"Mr. Jones is a widower," Mr. Apsley said, as he stood waiting to see a servant show me out. "His house, I think, has a mistress in the person of a relative."

I lifted my eyes by accident—or was it magnetic attraction?—and saw a daintily robed figure leaning over the baluster of the staircase. It was Miss Apsley. My heart bounded absurdly at the sight.

There was a slight smile on her pretty lips. Whether the expression was amused, haughty, contemptuous—I could not be sure; but I knew, as clearly as if she had said it, that she was aware of my infatuation. Girls are alertly perceptive in that way. So certain was I that she had discerned my secret that I felt like apologizing for the impertinence of having harbored it; but mechanically and silently I departed on my errand.

Then the thought came to me that Annie Apsley had displayed a personal interest in the letter which I was conveying to Mr. Jones. At once the missive was like lead in my hand, and I felt a desire to throw it into the Thames. It might be a tender communication from her. O, not likely, else her father would not have made so much concern about it. Anyhow, common sense bade me go straight about my business, and I did so.

In two minutes I was on my way to the railway, and caught the first train to the place in question. Though the station was a comparatively small one, I foresaw some difficulty in finding the manager, who probably lived in a modest way (though he had what seemed to me a gigantic salary of £800 a year), for he was a very modest, retiring sort of man, and Jones is not an uncommon name. However, I made my application to the station master directly I got out.

"Do you happen to know where a Mr. Jones lives in this neighborhood?"

"Mr. Jones," he replied, "do you mean Squire Jones?"

"No," I said, "that is not the gentleman; I want Mr. Jones of Cornhill."

The station master shook his head, as though in deprecation of all commercial persons; he said he was not acquainted with any person of that name except "the Squire." There was nothing for it but to take a fly to Harton Hall, where it seemed this great man lived. If it was not exactly "a hall," after the country, or rather "county" pattern, it was very superior to any "villa residence." We were admitted by a lodge-keeper through gilded iron gates which opened upon park-like and quite extensive grounds. The longer I took in driving through them the more certain I felt that I was on a fool's errand, and the sight of the mansion itself convinced me of it.

It was of great size, and on that summer night the unshuttered windows of the lower rooms emitted a blaze of light; there was evidently a dinner party, or perhaps even a ball going on. I was quite ashamed of myself and my errand when my humble vehicle drew up at the stately portico, and a footman attired like a field-marshal, answered the summons of the front door bell.

"Does Mr. Jones live here?" I inquired hesitatingly; "Mr. Jones of Apsley, Wellesley & Co!"

"Yes, sir."

You might have knocked me down with a feather; I should have been a little more surprised to hear that this was the country residence of my fellow clerk, Jack Spriggins, who shared the parlor at my lodgings. Though myself almost penniless I came of a good family, and knew the proportion of scales of living among landed proprietors, but the splendor of that entrance hall with its statues and pictures threw all I had seen elsewhere of the kind into the shade; in particular it struck me how very much grander it was than my employer's hall in which I had stood but an hour ago.

I gave my card to the footman, and was ushered into a side room, the fittings and furniture of which threw Mr. Apsley's "snuggery" completely into the shade. It was more like a boudoir than a room used for business purposes, though I recognized Mr. Jones's little black bag lying in one corner of

it, and also his letter-case upon a marble table. In the few seconds that it took me to observe these things, there was a constant clatter of knives and forks and hum of conversation from the dining room, on the other side of the hall; it was evidently a very large dinner party, yet the host did not hesitate to leave it on the instant that the servant brought him in my card. It seemed to me almost impossible that he could have been with me so soon, yet there he was, looking in his evening dress as I had never seen him before, but with a much greater change in him than that; the manager's face was ghastly pale; there was a dew upon it for which the warmth of the evening could hardly account, while the expression of his little grey eyes was anxious and perturbed to the last degree.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Ackers," he said, in a voice of unmistakable expectation and alarm; "What is it? Nothing wrong, I hope, with Mr. Apsley?"

I suppose it was my slight connection with the senior partner that suggested this apprehension, for it would have been more natural, as it struck me, for him to say "nothing wrong at the office."

"I cannot say, sir," I replied; "but Mr. Apsley sent me over with this letter to you, which he said was of extreme importance."

The manager took the letter, and tore it open with a haste I had never seen him use; he was a very slow, methodical man, and took everything in general very quietly. Directly he had read the letter his ordinary manner returned to him.

"There is nothing here requiring such immediate haste, I think, but of course, tell Mr. Apsley it shall be attended to at once. Mr—that is, the gentleman he alludes to—shall hear from me by to-night's post. I have a few friends to dinner, Mr. Ackers, though as you are not in evening dress, you may not care to join them; but you must at all events have a glass of wine."

This I declined and he did not press it; though perfectly civil, indeed much more conciliatory in his manner than I had ever known him to be, for it was always cold and reserved; he was obviously glad to get rid of me. As a host detained from his guests this was not to be wondered at; but the impression it left upon me was very unpleasant.

As I passed into the hall the ladies were leaving the dining

room; six or eight of them, all beautifully dressed, trooped up the staircase without perceiving our presence, but the last one, the lady of the house, caught sight of us, and looked surprised. She was a very handsome woman, half a head taller and considerably larger than Mr. Jones, and her voice, though musical enough, had a touch of imperiousness in it, as she enquired what was detaining him.

"My young friend, Mr. Ackers," he explained, "has been so good as to bring me an important letter from Cornhill."

"Oh, the office," she answered contemptuously, and without taking the least notice of the introduction, she followed her guests up the stairs.

As I drove away to the station, it seemed to me like awakening from a sort of splendid nightmare; was it possible that Squire Jones could really be one with our most respectable but very unassuming manager? Could that virago in lace and satin be his relative?

Looking back on that strange experience from my present standpoint, I am conscious that the lady's behavior affected my view of Mr. Jones's position injuriously. My suspicions of him would have been aroused in any case, but the insolence with which his helpmate had treated me, made me jump to the conclusion that there was a screw loose somewhere. It was very illogical, for the lady's conduct had at least shown that she was not afraid of me, or of any account I was likely to give of my visit to Harton, but I was too put out by it to draw conclusions of that kind. It was bad enough that people should be purse-proud who were really rich, but that the housekeeper of a man with £800 a year, who was living at the rate of £8000, should give herself airs was intolerable.

Of the reckless extravagance of our manager's mode of life there could indeed be no question, unless his wife had been an heiress, in which case it was to the last degree unlikely that she would have married Mr. Jones; but a much more painful suspicion had taken hold of me. I could not forget the consternation he had exhibited upon seeing me, his feverish anxiety to know the errand on which I had come, and his evident relief when the contents of Mr. Apsley's letter had informed him of it. That he expected something of a far graver nature I was convinced. As I sat in the railway carriage alone—in a first-class compartment, of

course, as was only right when travelling on the business of the firm, which, of course, paid the "exes"—and reflected upon the whole situation, I felt that it was in truth a serious one. There was no question as to what it was my interest to do; when I presently saw Mr. Apsley—he had told me to call, no matter how late the hour, in order to assure him that his directions had been attended to—I might make a clean breast to him, not only of my late experiences but of my suspicions. "What I tell you, sir," I might say, "I tell you in confidence, but it is my conviction that there is something wrong with Mr. Jones."

Even if I had misjudged the manager, this would do me no harm, and if I was right I should have a claim upon the firm which they could hardly ignore. It was clear to me that was the most profitable course to take; but in what direction lay my duty? I had no regard for Mr. Jones whatever; indeed I rather disliked him; he was less like a man in the office than a machine (though out of it it seemed he was "human" enough), and showed no sympathy for any of us. But was it my business to ruin him? The notion of telling tales "out of school" was hateful to me as to all young fellows of decent feeling; and besides (though that was not so commendable) I had a notion that a firm which makes tens of thousands a year is in a position to take care of itself. I had not at that time that sympathy with well-to-do persons, which, I am thankful to say, circumstances have since developed in me.

On the other hand, Mr. Apsley was not only my father's friend, but to a certain extent, and according to his lights (though they were rather dim ones) had been his friend. Was it right, entertaining such suspicions as I did, and which so nearly affected the well-being of the firm I served, that I should keep silence about them?

Some philosophers hold that conscience, properly consulted, is an unerring guide for conduct; but, perhaps, from want of practice, I did not consult her properly; at all events, I was puzzled how to act. I think if it had not been for that house-keeper, I should not have said a word about the matter. If there had been a Miss Jones at Horton Hall, of nice manners and appearance, I feel sure I should have been silent. Think of bringing misfortune and, perhaps, disgrace upon an innocent girl! Upon the whole I resolved to adopt a middle

course. I would simply tell my story—more or less of it as circumstances should demand—without any comment of my own, and leave my employer to draw his own conclusions.

It was eleven o'clock when I reached Mr. Apsley's door. I was shown in, as before, to his study, and found him there, smoking a cigar; though evidently pleased to see me, he did not ask me to have one.

"Well, you gave the manager my letter?" he inquired, sharply.

"Yes, sir; he said the matter should be attended to to-night."

"That's well; you have been very expeditious, Mr. Ackers; I suppose you had no difficulty in finding out Mr. Jones."

It was evident he had no interest in the subject, and only mentioned it to avoid the discourtesy of dismissing me at once.

"No, sir, none at all; he was living, indeed, in the best house in the place."

"Aye, aye. He has a good house, has he? Any grounds about it?" Here he yawned.

"Yes, sir; indeed the house almost stands in a park."

"Really; all these suburban places boast of something of the kind. Holland Park began it."

I saw that he was getting very wide of the mark; but this made it all the harder for me to tell my story with any significance at all.

"I should think it stood in not less than five acres of ground. It was called Harton Hall."

"You don't say so; well done, Jones." Mr. Apsley seemed really amused. "I'll ask him to-morrow how they all are at the Hall?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," I said, "but I do hope you will not do that. It will make him think ill of me."

"To be sure, he may compare you to the spy that discovered the land flowing with milk and honey. And yet why should it not flow? Jones has been thirty years with us, and I dare say has had many good things put in his way. Why shouldn't he call his house a Hall if he likes?"

"Why, indeed, sir, so far as I am concerned," I replied, dryly, for I was very much chagrined at being thus treated like a child. It was now quite clear to me that no hint—short of a direct statement of my suspicions—would have any effect upon Mr. Apsley's mind; and I was sincerely glad of it.

The pendulum of my sympathies had swung round to Jones' side. My employer's manner had certainly not been encouraging; it was less so than ever after my last reply.

"It is growing late, and you must be tired, Mr. Ackers; will you have a glass of wine?"

I declined his offer as I had declined Mr. Jones', for the hospitality of neither gentleman had been very pressing, and was about to back out of the room when Annie Apsley entered.

"I have been eavesdropping, papa," she said quietly enough, and yet I thought that the pink in her cheek was brighter than usual, and that her voice was under restraint.

The father silenced her by an almost imperceptible gesture, and then, while he still sat in his easy chair, introduced me to Miss Apsley in an off-hand, informal manner. The young lady bowed in a way which might mean, as I construed it, that she recognized under protest a fellow who had indulged himself—almost, if not quite—in backbiting a man in the presence of his sweetheart. I could have sunk through the floor in my shame.

I mumbled an incoherent acknowledgment of the honor which my employer had done to me by presenting me to his daughter, and bade the two good evening. But my last glance back into the hallway, as the door was shutting behind me, showed the father and the daughter as vivacious as before they had been calm. They were engaged in a quick, earnest dialogue. What could it mean?

I felt much relieved that matters were thus ended, but though I doubt whether I should have taken my opportunity even if it had offered itself, I was conscious that the whole affair had somehow fizzled out. If I had denounced the manager I should probably by this time have been agonized by remorse; if I had said nothing of the position in which I had found him I should have been reproaching myself, no doubt, with disloyalty to my employers, but now that I had taken the middle course it seemed something ridiculous, and indeed, contemptible. When I got home and found Spriggins with his pipe, wakeful and inquisitive, I felt not the least temptation to tell him anything about "what old Apsley had sent for me about."

I said "it was a private matter," which made him wild with curiosity, and my refusal to gratify it caused a quarrel be-

tween us. My expedition to Harton may have had its dramatic attractions, but from a social point of view it certainly did not seem to have been a success. The next morning when I saw my manager in his business coat, toting up the accounts as usual, I could hardly believe him to be the "Squire Jones" I had called upon not twelve hours before. He made not the smallest allusion to my visit, nor did Mr. Apsley to the errand on which he had sent me.

There happened to be great excitement at the office that morning, consequent on the resignation of Mr. Roberts, the third clerk, who, lucky dog, had "come in for money," and it whirled Spriggins away with it like the rest. He forgot all about our last night's quarrel and my injurious treatment of him.

The unwonted agitation of the previous evening had had its effect I suppose upon my nerves, for I had a splitting headache, which grew worse and worse; and upon that plea, which I do not remember to have ever used before, I obtained leave of absence from my immediate chief, and went home to bed. I slept for some hours, and on awaking, much refreshed, found Spriggins standing by my bedside.

"Sorry to disturb you, old fellow," he said, "but I am fairly bursting with intelligence (he meant information, the other thing was incredible). There's been such a scrimmage at the office as was never heard of. Jones has bolted."

"Bolted? The manager? Then he's got away?"

"Well, yes, for the present; though I don't think the firm will be so gratified about that as you seem to be. However he missed his tip this time as regards the swag—"

"Do for Heaven's sake speak English. What tip? What swag?"

"To be sure you have been asleep, while I've been talking about nothing else for the last three hours. There are defalcations—fifty thousand pounds they say—extending over a long series of years, but there would have been ten thousand more gone—all negotiable securities—but for their opening the safe where they were found neatly made up to go in his bag this very night; you remember his black bag?" I nodded eagerly, but with a sinking sensation too; I knew more about Jones than Spriggins did; the catastrophe seemed to have something personal as well as shocking about it. As I sat up in bed, I saw the bag lying in the corner of the

gorgeous room at Harton Hall; I heard the clatter of talk from the dining-room; I saw the ladies trailing their fine dresses up the stairs; and I heard once more, Jones' "house-keeper's" voice saying "Oh, from the office!"

"They found it out while he was at lunch, and the detectives sat in his room with the warrant for him, only he never came back. The old fellow smelt a rat, I suppose."

I think this highly probable. I think he read something he was looking for in my face that morning, and coupling it with my unusual disappearance (for he had asked for me it seemed) had decided as he sat over his chop at the eating house that he had better be off at once. To take the bag away with him at that early hour would have brought suspicion, if suspicion there was, to a head immediately. He did not dare to risk it, and in his case the better part of valor had certainly been discretion; for five minutes of such courage would have cost him five years-penal. He was never seen again in England.

Ten days afterwards or so, I was summoned from my desk to the partner's parlor. It was not generally a pleasant invitation, but rather resembled what is called at Cambridge being "convened;" to a guilty conscience it meant something very serious, but though my conscience may be thought peculiar it was not a guilty one.

There were four partners whom I scarcely knew by sight, and Mr. Apsley who completed the quorum and was the speaker.

"Mr. Ackers, we have sent for you to congratulate you upon your conduct the other night with respect to our late manager. You showed yourself aware of what was due to one who had held a position of trust with us for many years, and also to your employer's interests. You said neither more nor less than you ought to have said. If nothing was wrong with him, you did him no harm, if there was anything amiss you put us on our guard. It is owing to you that certain very grievous losses incurred through this man's dishonesty, and of which we had had hitherto no clue, have not been very seriously increased. I am instructed by the firm to thank you; (here four most respectable heads bowed to me affably). It is very unusual to find so young a man endowed with such discretion. You will take Mr. Roberts' place as third clerk in this establishment. Good morning."

It was a very pleasant quarter of an hour. What I have often thought of, since, was the astuteness with which that excellent old gentleman concealed from me that night the suspicions which I myself had awakened. He, of course, perceived the necessity of not arousing those of Mr. Jones, by communicating them to me. Another thing which has always puzzled me is my own behavior on that occasion; my conscience was clearly commendable since its workings were so well rewarded; but how very near it was to going wrong in—so to speak—both ways!

About Miss Apsley, and her conduct, as I have described it, with relation to the absconder? O, I can make that clear, if the reader feels any portion of my interest in that young lady, by writing of how I went to her house a few evenings after my interview with the firm. I had dreamt of her by night, and mused of her by day, until I had good reason to regard myself as a half-daft lover; when one morning I found on my desk a neat, square, femininely addressed envelope, bearing no mark of having passed through the mail. I opened it, and read that "Miss Apsley would feel honored by the presence of Mr. Ackers", at a small and informal dancing party, to be held at her residence on an evening half a week ahead. I rubbed my eyes and read it through several times. No; I was not dreaming. Miss Apsley really invited me to be a guest.

Need I say that my mind was not much occupied with office duties in the interval; or that, when I presented myself at the Apsley's residence, I looked as well as a careful toilet and prearranged good manners could achieve. The young lady received me graciously, introduced me to the other guests, and soon made of me a happy and—I trust—congenial participant in the evening's diversions. I was her partner in a waltz, and then, incited to it by her agreeableness, I asked for a second dance and got it.

"You are very good, indeed, to me," I said to her, in a quite heartfelt way, as we were circling about in this latter waltz.

"And you were very good to me," she smilingly echoed.

"I! How?"

"O, about Mr. Jones."

An alcove was at hand, and we stepped in it by mutual consent.

"Pray explain," I said. "I imagined at the time that I had not been considerate."

"Didn't papa thank you for the service you had rendered?"

"To the firm—yes; he was good enough to call it a service and to recompense me."

"To me, I mean. Let me tell you, then, that it was my own money—a modest fortune left me by my mother—that Mr. Jones had planned to take, in addition to that which he had already stolen from the firm. You saved me from that loss, and yet you treated the matter—the subject—Mr. Jones and me so delicately—so——"

Miss Apsley was confused. In her warmhearted desire to thank me, she had enmeshed herself.

"I overheard you at the office, asking a clerk if Mr. Jones were a suitor of mine," she resumed, frankly and resolutely, "and at the time I was a little provoked. Again, when father sent you on the quest for Mr. Jones, that evening, you caught me listening on the stairway, and wondered why I was so interested. It was because I had instinctively mistrusted and disliked the man. When you returned, and reluctantly bore witness against him, I was too much agitated by fear for my property to fully appreciate your considerate conduct. Now I thank you—indeed, I do—and what can I do to requite your kindness?"

"Let me love you."

Yes; that is what I said, on the impulse; and then I hastened to add: "I don't ask you to love me. I know that of course you don't. I know that you never will. But may I love you?"

As though I could have obeyed if she had forbidden me.

"I believe you are sincere, Mr. Ackers," she simply said, "and I will consider your regard as a compliment—which need not be repeated. Will you take me to the supper room?"

She was as gracious to me as though I had not affronted her. At later meetings she showed no resentment. About a year afterward I did repeat the "compliment," and now we are husband and wife.

HIS LAST RÔLE*

BY PAUL GERRISTY

The curtain had been already raised three times and still the applause was prolonged, They were compelled to raise it again. Darzincourt, his left hand pressed against his heart, his right holding several gilt laurel crowns, bowed, while his eyes filled with tears. The bravos increased to a storm; he wanted to say something to express his thanks to the public, but the old comedian could only open his lips and utter a mumbling sound. He was overcome; his emotion was too deep to clothe in words.

Canes beat on the floor with a furious noise, the entire theatre shook with the sound. Again and again did the ushers pass up to the stage paper palm branches bearing ribbons on which the principal rôles of the actor were printed. Meanwhile as Darzincourt stood in the midst of the company that had supported him, the stage manager left the group and embraced him in the name of the crowd. At the same time he placed one of the crowns on his head. The crown, far too large, slipped down to his shoulders, but what of that, the scene was beautiful!

It was on this tableau and amid fresh and furious applause that the curtain descended, leaving Darzincourt to take off his crown and receive the felicitations of his comrades.

Never before in that provincial city had a similar manifestation been made over a retiring actor; and, as he was to leave the stage permanently, there was no jealousy among his fellows. So they retired to the Café de la Comédie, where a second ovation awaited him, and the fragrant smoke from the punch-bowls on the marble tables revived the enthusiasm of those who pressed forward to do him honor. And there were toasts without number you may be sure!

The old habitués of the theatre reproached him for leaving them so soon—"Why, if one pleases the public one is always young."

And he, rubbing his chin that had been shaved for more

*Translated from the French, by Ernest DeLancey Pierson, for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

than half a century, was obliged to defend his retirement. His hair was white, he was too rheumatic to kneel gracefully in the love scenes. Besides he had made his mark, his life had been passed on the boards. Well he needed repose. He wanted to see the real country instead of faded canvas. He had dreamed of a little farm, a little garden where he could smoke his pipe in peace to the end of his days. It was time to think of himself, he had given enough of his life to the public. And it was amusing to hear him speak of his farming projects, seated there in the costume of Louis XV., with the "make-up" still on his face, which in the heat of the café glistened in oily lines.

At last the manager, with his majestic gravity, and also moved by the libations he had taken during that affecting evening, declared that there was no telling what the future might bring forth. Who could say that Darzincourt would not come back some day? But the latter shook his head. No! his decision had been made, he wanted now to enjoy the luxury of doing nothing.

Two days afterwards Darzincourt, installed in his little house, his head covered with a large straw hat, wearing a linen suit and wooden shoes, began to water his flowers in the midst of the broiling sun, while chatting with his little serving maid.

"But you ought to wait until evening," she said. "They will perish."

"Bah!" he smiled. "Flowers are like women, you can't show them too much attention."

From that time a delicious life began for him in the peace of his rustic home. He thought with horror of the rehearsals of other days, of the constant changing of costumes and parts to be learned, and shivered at the remembrance of those scenes which called for nervous action. A year of peaceful pleasure followed. He was very happy and why not? he kept asking himself again and again—so often in fact that he began to doubt if he felt so sincerely.

This happiness at the bottom was devilish monotonous. Yet he was not willing to acknowledge that ennui had crept into that pretty little house which he had longed for so much. And the more he assured himself that he needed nothing, the more he saw that the days that dragged by were abominably void and dull.

To-day, seated in an arbor taking his coffee, he allowed his pipe to go out as he read over some old plays; occasionally pausing to exclaim, as he came to some familiar rôle, "Ah, I was great in that!" And the old memories of the past that he thought were buried came back to the present and sang a siren song in his ears. Ah! the music of applause, the shouts and bravos that set the lights trembling, after an impassioned speech! And the little servant, coming to remove the dishes, surprised him standing there flushed of face, his hair blowing in the breeze, apostrophizing an imaginary personage.

"Ah, Monsieur le Comte—at last we are face to face!"

"A Count here. Where is this Count of yours?"

And the girl laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks.

Oh, these old habits that we can never lay aside! One fine day Darzincourt was forced to acknowledge that he regretted the theatre. Well, yes, why not? One cannot live on the boards with impunity, and not suffer from nostalgia. He subscribed to the town paper, and followed the theatrical notices written by a young lawyer's clerk who had literary aspirations. When he read the eulogies on his old companions his bile rose, besides they were playing in rôles that he had filled. He had hesitated before, he hesitated no more.

One morning he abandoned his linen suit, put on his holiday clothes and sought the director of the theatre. The latter appeared to be surprised at the visit, and learning the motive raised his hands with a gesture of deprecation.

"What, Darzincourt at his age wished to reappear?"

And he noticed that the comedian stooped feebly since he had lived an idle exile, and had accumulated a fresh crop of whiskers; still the prospect of a fruitful evening, on the strength of the actor's reputation, tempted him and he had already formed a plan announcing the "reappearance" of the celebrated Darzincourt.

"Well, why shouldn't you return to the stage?" he said.

Radiant with the idea of again filling this dingy hall with his sonorous speeches, the old actor began to discuss the piece. He didn't need any rehearsals of course, he had played the part so often! With the joy of a child he sought the costume room, tried on again the clothes that he had worn more than a hundred times, requested that a few

changes be made, and passed the day in consultation with the hairdresser and costumer of the theatre.

Not a wig pleased him, he ordered a new one. A nervous gaiety possessed him, he could have turned somersaults.

The advertisement produced its effect. When the time came the hall was crowded to witness his reappearance, but the feverish enthusiasm that he had counted on was lacking. He appeared—a little applause saluted him but it was not continued. The audience became apathetic. What! was this the Darzincourt that had charmed them in other days? Why the poor fellow was grotesque! He felt disconcerted but not alarmed. Since his departure they had missed the fire of the old school of acting; he would show them what it was!

The old patrons of the theatre, whom he knew, uttered little exclamations of surprise. The new-comers began openly to ridicule. The rest of the company sulked and gave Darzincourt his cues reluctantly until he began to lose his assurance, little by little. He stumbled in a pathetic speech—turned a sentence into ridicule—the parterre howled. From that moment every word, every gesture provoked a tempest.

Darzincourt felt a cold perspiration gather on his forehead. Around him in the boxes people were going out—and he murmured pale with anger “Ingrates! Ingrates!”

At that point in the play where he was to fall—in a faint after reading a letter—he could not get up, until a machinist was sent to help him. Then the hisses rose like a storm. Such an opportunity to have fun was infrequent in this quiet town, and the crowd set up an awful racket. But Darzincourt persisted, though his eyes were filled with tears—at last crushed by his emotions he forgot his lines. He stood with mouth wide open, hearing no more the derisive shrieks of the orchestra or the cat-calls from the galleries. The failure was decisive, the play could go no further. Entering his dressing-room the old comedian tore his hair—reeling like a drunken man.

“You’ve put us in a nice box” growled the director who nevertheless had just pocketed the receipts.

Darzincourt regained his home in a crushed condition. A whole life of glory to end in this fatal defeat! Still dressed he lay down on the bed and reviewed the horrible evening. No! he would not allow himself to be beaten. He would

fight again. Could he leave the theatre forever? Even with its chagrins and mortifications he had need of it.

The handsome Darzincourt of the past now supplicated and implored the Director; he did not wish to be paid—he only asked to have a small rôle given him—a little, a *véry* little rôle.

From motives of economy they acceded to his request—he was given the part of a servant and he set out to study it with all the ardor of a *débutant*.

When he came in, letter in hand, the audience without reason, except that of cruel joy, began to sing “*Dar-zin-court—Dar-zin-court*” to a popular air. From balcony to orchestra rang the derisive sound.

“You see, my poor old man” said the manager “you are no longer wanted.” And he, haggard, sinking—having tasted again the intoxication of the theatre, asked himself in desperation what was to become of him away from the footlights.

After that he asked only permission to be a supernumerary, man of the people, archer of the palace, noble without importance. But they recognized him in the midst of the others and the public accustomed to having amusement at his expense filled the hall with noise and laughter. It was impossible to allow him to appear now even as a “*supe.*” The little house at the gates of the town still smiled beneath its burden of clematis and fresh green vines, but he came there no more.

All his life was bound up in the theatre. He was a martyr off the stage! He passed his days in a corner of the wings, having no more the right to show himself in the evening, however humbly. He wasted away, worn by sadness and longing; wandering about through the dressing-rooms of the artists, like an old dog whose hunting days are over, but whom no one will turn away. One night the manager approached him with a cruel smile. “Look here,” he said, “We are going to put on a new piece. In the third act the barking of a dog is heard in the wings. You be the dog, will you?”

Darzincourt took the extended hand in his—trembling with joy—his face transfigured—as he stammered out his thanks.

“A rôle” he cried. “I shall have another rôle!”

THE DEPUTY COLLECTOR*

BY WALTER J. DAVIS

The governmental supernumerary who personally wrests from the people Uncle Sam's internal revenue does not lead a life of leather-cushioned luxury. Had the Deputy Collector, for the Northern Division of New Mexico, been disposed to mildly generalize, he might have given utterance to some such thought, but he was otherwise inclined; he swore, irrelevantly, but fervently, and twisted and untwisted a telegram. Here is the message the yellow paper contained:

Santa Fé, N. Mex. Jan. 20.

Higgins is in your division. Five miles above Mora. Go for him. Collector.

The Deputy Collector was a young man who took it very ill indeed when things did not go to suit him; and running afoul of this message at Las Vegas, as he was "getting back to civilization," after a wearing circuit in the rough-and-tough settlements, went very hard with him.

He sat down and gazed gloomily out through the glass door of the hotel and saw the naked saplings in the plaza wrestling with the wind. The weather was cold and it was a good day to be indoors. The aerial torrent which forever rushes out of the Gallinas cañon, simultaneously with the Gallinas river, that morning did its worst and howled along the mountain-side and hurled itself against Las Vegas. Every now and then, the view from the hotel was obliterated by dense clouds of flying sand. A 'bus backed up to the sidewalk, a porter got off the rear steps, thrust his black, grinning face in at the door and sang out. "A—a—all aboa'd fer de Santy Fee goin' souf!"

It was too much for the Deputy Collector. "The very train I was going on," he exclaimed, giving the scrap of paper he held in his hand another twist, and then, as if his bitterness were more than any one man could endure, he walked over to the clerk's counter and made the patient and professionally sympathetic man behind it bear part of his burden.

"Say, look here George," said the aggrieved young man, "ain't this about the toughest luck you ever heard of? Here

*A story of New Mexico. Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

I've been on the road six weeks, travelled all over that miserable, bleak, Tramperos country, got half drowned in Red River, missed my mail at Tequesquite, got in here all fagged last night and turned out early this morning to catch the train to Santa Fé, and now I run against this!" and he tossed the crumpled telegram over to him.

The clerk took the abused document and spread it out, smoothing away the wrinkles until the message was as nearly intelligible as a telegraph operator's palsied script usually is; then he laborious read it.

"Who's Higgins?" he asked.

"Jumper."

"Bad man?"

"Guess so; got by three deputies."

"Oh, that's no sign," returned the clerk, with a dry grin, "but can't you go home and wait till you've rested up a little?"

"Go home? You don't know 'The Colonel,'" said 'The Colonel's' deputy, with a sad shake of the head.

"Well, it *is* tough," at last admitted the clerk, as he shoveled more coal into the big stove.

However, it was "a case of have to," as the Deputy Collector grumblingly acknowledged, and so he at once set about getting ready for his journey. The hotel stable furnished a pair of bay broncos, which, attached to a buck-board and driven by a rusty-looking little Mexican, crouched back in a "duck" overcoat three sizes too big for him, were soon around at the side door, pawing up more sand for the wind to scatter, and whinnying to the Deputy Collector to hurry. Enveloped to his eyebrows in his heavy storm-coat, the unwilling passenger from Mora stepped into the vehicle, seated himself, pulled his cap down and the lap-robe up and said to the driver, "Bueno!"

The bay bronchos snorted and bounded against the gale, and my, what a howling hurricane it was! But the Deputy Collector forgot his physical discomfort in the midst of his mental suffering, for he now had time to brood over his greatest disappointment, one of which he had not spoken to the commiserating clerk. It was Ellen of whom he was now thinking; Ellen, the preacher's daughter; dear Ellen, whom he loved and had expected to see that night. And to-morrow was Sunday, too, and could he have evaded this crude and

inconsiderate official order, he would certainly, at 11 A. M. on the next day, be seated by her side in the little church, making a saintly pretence of being absorbed in spiritual things, but really resting his soul upon Ellen, for his more human beatification. And it certainly was sadly different to be sitting beside a dusky and taciturn descendent of the *Hidalgos*, blear-eyed with the flying sand, and chilled by the cold—it was “pretty darned rough,” as he himself audibly announced to all the earth.

In his endeavor to turn his thoughts away from himself he addressed the Mexican.

“What’s your name?”

The Mexican shook his head.

“Oh, you can’t understand? You mean you won’t. Well, here goes at you straight, “*Como se llama usted?*”

“*José Maria Apodaca*,” was the answer.

“*Bueno*. Now can’t you talk English—Ingles—a little bit?”

“*Un’ poco*.”

“I thought so; now go on and talk to me. I’ve got the blues and I must be entertained, *sabe?*”

José Maria Apodaca, however, failed to “*sabe*” this intricate remark, and shook his head again, muttering, “*sabe Ingles leedle beet*,” so the Deputy Collector was once more left to his thoughts.

Coming down the long hill on the south side of the rushing *Sapello*, he remembered that it was here that this same team of bronchos had last year run away with his friend the Timber Inspector, and had fractured his hip, by hurling him against a jagged cropping on the other bank. This gave him an opportunity to mournfully enjoy himself by picturing his own sad state were he to meet with a similar, or more fatal accident. He thought how pitiful and sweet would sound the dear voice of Ellen, as she mourned for him, while he lay gradually dying. Of course, he was not to be killed outright but was just to be nicely mangled. Then a rough bump of the wheel against an obstruction shook him from his maundering and he said aloud “I’m a chump.”

Mr. *Apodaca*, aroused from a little reverie of his own by this utterance, turned toward the speaker a look of such entire acquiescence that it was plain that his comprehension of English thoroughly encompassed the significance of that expression.

The wind relented a little, as the day grew, and the view up the Sapello opened out so grandly, with the big, blue dome of the mountain at Rincon Tecolote, closing the vista, that the Deputy Collector fell to gazing and admiring and his temper improved.

At last, the long drive ended. Mora, a grimy collection of low adobe dwellings, strung along on either side of a busy little stream, was reached an hour before the sun went down.

Fat Tom Walton, the proprietor of "The Walton House," heard the rattle of wheels and came lazily out and stood on the broad porch smiling. As the buck-board stopped, he stretched out his arms and yawned then he took them down and relaxed the tension of his frame, and called out hospitably, "Git out and come in; you mus' be tired. Where you frum? Vegas?"

Yes; they were from "Vegas," he was told, but there was no time to bandy words, the young man said, as he had important work to do. In fact he had, within the last hour, determined on a prompt course of action; so he made arrangements for stabling his horses and housing himself and Mr. Apodaca for the night, and then asked Tom if a fresh horse could be saddled and bridled for his immediate use.

"W'y, where you goin' to go this late in the day?" demanded his host inquisitively.

"Never mind now, Tom," he answered, with a smile, "all I want to know is, can you fix me up?"

"Well, I ain't like the man that couldn't?" said Mr. Walton, "but you needn't think I don't know who you're after, over in this neck o' the woods. I'm onter all you fellers, like a brick, if you do think you're so all-fired cute." Then lowering his voice so that José couldn't hear, he continued, with important enunciation, "he's up there all right; I seen his tent to-day. Say, do you want any help?"

"Oh, no;" answered this superior young officer, "I'll manage him."

Tom Walton shook his head and evidently had his doubts of this but forbore expressing them, and the Deputy Collector smiled to himself and wondered just what sort of help fat Tom could afford him, even if it had been wanted.

Fifteen minutes thereafter he was urging a clumsy and unwilling steed along the bridle-path which led up the cañon.

The wind was not so wild, down in that protected place, and its toying was pleasantly different from the rough horse-play of the gusts that ranted over the plain. As he rode along, the Deputy Collector further developed his plan. He would make a dazzling virtue of this hard necessity. He would take this outlaw, bristling with knives and revolvers, and present him to the governmental authorities at Sante Fé. The more he thought of it the greater grew his official zeal. He felt back for his revolver; yes, it was there. No doubt there would be great personal risk, but the greater the better, for, by reason of it, he would be doubly distinguished in the accomplishment of his purpose.

The cañon now became more and more "boxed" and narrow. The reluctant pony picked his way lamely among the broken stones that beset his path. At length, however, a wider space could be seen ahead, and man and beast made their way to it.

Here was, perhaps, a half acre of level turf, in a nook of the north wall. Some leafless cottonwoods lifted bare arms up toward the edge of the bluff far above, as if asking to be helped out. Under one of these stood a little "A" tent. Near by was a small covered wagon, with dished wheels and a broken tongue, badly patched. Two lean horses were picketed a little way off. That was all that was in sight at first. Upon his nearer and more cautious approach, the Deputy Collector disturbed a heavy-eyed cur who started up, shivering, from a bed of leaves, showed his teeth, gave one short bark and then, as if he considered further demonstration too fatiguing, put down head and tail, turned himself about and about and finally cuddled himself circularly into his nest again.

The flap of the tent was now put back from the inside and the Deputy Collector braced himself. Then a man stepped out. Such a man! Not above five feet in height, sickly-blue of eye, pale, nearly expressionless in the flat blankness of his face, with faded yellow whiskers, which were no whiskers—merely occasional hairs pendant from a parchment mask. His clothes were ragged and patched. He was in his shirt sleeves and wore an old brown slouched hat. There was a tired look about him that was somehow more expressed in his posture than in his nondescript countenance. His legs were bowed with labor, and his lean arms bent stiffly for-

ward from his elbows. There was pathos in his pose, but the ambitious young officer did not see it. He was fierce and felt his authority weigh upon him with delightful heaviness.

"Your name is Higgins, is it not?" he asked.

"Yes, sir;" answered the man, with his weak eyes blinking vacantly under the official stare.

"Throw up your hands, Higgins."

As the defender of the Nation's internal interests uttered these words, he drew his revolver with the flourish of a private-theatrical villain, and presented it at that ragged breast.

Higgins slowly raised his work-warped hands. He did not seem as frightened as his captor could have wished, his obedience being a merely mechanical expression of his hopelessness.

"You must go with me, Higgins," said the Deputy Collector. "You are known to have been peddling whiskey, and the law does not allow that. I have been sent to arrest you and turn you over to the United States authorities. You will, of course, not resist; it would be useless. I see you have no weapon upon you and you may take down your hands, but hurry and get ready, for we must start."

There was something new to Higgins in this. He seemed to have expected being put through some sort of process—a severe catechising, perhaps, followed by a seizure of his property, or he might not have been surprised at personal chastisement, but he appeared never to have thought of being carried bodily away.

"Start?" He leaned forward and his voice had that in it which meant pain as well as surprise. "No, Mister, don't take me anywhere—take all I've got, but leave me. I can't—why what would become of little Annie?"

The Deputy Collector's fierceness was by this time abating rapidly, and he began to feel a strong interest in this strange man.

"Who is little Annie?" he asked.

Higgins lifted the flap of the tent. "Come inside," said he, in a half hushed tone. The two went in.

Daylight was fast going and it was rather dark inside the tent, though some live coals threw up a red glare from one corner of the apartment. Higgins struck a match and lighted a candle and held it above his head. The Deputy

Collector looked around. He saw that the firelight was from the vent of a sheet-iron funnel which, placed on the ground, large end down, connected with a pipe and formed a stove. Higgins' coat hung from the ridge-pole of the tent, with its arms bent like his. Behind the stove a little bundle began to move and presently sat up and stared about. The young official was actually startled by the beauty of the child that thus revealed itself.

"That's little Annie," said Higgins, pointing to her.

"I been s'leep, papa," said the child, putting aside her curls and smiling up at him. Then she saw the stranger. "Who is oo?" she asked.

The Deputy Collector loved children. He picked up a camp-stool and went over and seated himself by her.

"I 'is' a friend come to see you, Little Annie," he said.

"Did oo?" exclaimed the little thing, and she smiled again and winked her blue eyes fast, then she shook herself free from her blankets and climbed into his lap. She was dressed in plain cotton stuff, but what she had on was clean, and her bright little face was free from dirt and her curls had certainly been rewound for her sometime that day. It must have been Higgins who had done it. What deftness love had lent his clumsy fingers!

As the officer fondled the child Higgins looked on, a different man. His face had something light in it, and, all at once, he stood high in the Deputy Collector's respect.

"I'll tell you what my trouble was," said Higgins quietly, while Little Annie explored her new friend's pockets.

"My Mary—Little Annie's mother—died last Spring and I didn't have much left when she was gone. I had a farm once, but you know what farming is in Western Kansas—just work, work and then a mortgage. So I took what I had left and started a little saloon in Dodge City. Mary didn't want me to and it never did pay, but I thought it was best and I didn't know what else to do. Then my saloon burned up and Mary died. The last thing Mary said——" here he stopped and the Deputy Collector waited silently while Higgins went to the flap of the tent and looked out to see if his horses were all right.

His voice was steadier when he came back.

"Mary said I must promise her to take Little Annie to her

Aunt Jane in Santa Barbara, California. Mary was a good woman, Mr. Officer."

Here the Deputy Collector interrupted and said he knew it, and knew that she had loved, and been loved by a true and worthy man.

Higgins' eyes showed how this speech touched him, but he went on without further acknowledgment.

"Mary took so much pains with our little one, so I said I would take Little Annie right out there. I had three horses, and a brother-in-law of mine fixed me up with the wagon and I got ready to start. The boys at Dodge had saved some of my liquors and, as I had a license, I sold them as I came along. The internal revenue officers got after me in Kansas, and I found you can't peddle liquor, even if you have a license to sell it."

"No, you are not allowed to," assented the Deputy Collector.

"That's what they told me, but after that I had to sell some."

"What, after you were warned?"

"Yes, sir; I didn't mind going hungry myself, but I had to have something for Little Annie."

"Of course you did," said the young man, as he pressed the child's soft cheek to his own.

"And so I sold a little more, for us to get something to live on."

"You did exactly right; that is to say, speaking for myself—unofficially, you know."

"Yes, I know," said Higgins, "and now I'll tell you just how much I've sold and try to make it right with—"

"Tell me nothing more about it," broke in the Deputy Collector, as he rose from the stool supporting Little Annie on his left arm and reaching out his right arm toward the child's father.

"I want to say to you, Mr. Higgins, that I have been considering this thing very carefully, and I have serious doubts of my right to make an arrest in such a case as this. I think it devolves upon the United States' Marshal, or his deputy. Now, as a mere abstract question, what do you think of it, Mr. Higgins!"

Higgins was embarrassed.

"Well—of course, I couldn't say—"

"Oh, nonsense. Little Annie, you don't think I have any right to arrest your papa, do you?" He held her out in front of him with both his hands, looking into her eyes and shaking his head.

"No—o—o," she returned, wagging her head in accurate imitation of him.

"Of course not; now kiss me good night, sweetheart."

Her little arms went around his neck, and, as her small lips met his, she breathed into bloom a flower of chivalry, and raised up a mighty champion to the house of Higgins.

Higgins accompanied his guest to where his horse was picketed. When he was mounted, the Deputy Collector leaned from his saddle and shook hands with the law-breaker.

"Mr. Higgins," said he, "do you notice how still and pleasant these nights are, and how cold and raw and blustering it is in the day time! Now, it seems to me, if I had travelling to do, I would do most of it at night—it's merely a notion of course. I am going now. I shall look over my authorities. I've got them in my valise, down at Mora—and, in the meantime, you might think it over, Mr. Higgins, and when we come to a conclusion it is time enough to act. Good-bye; be careful of Little Annie."

Higgins held his hand hard and tried to say something, but couldn't. The Deputy Collector gently released his hand from Higgins' grasp, gathered up the bridle reins, slapped his horse's shoulder with the surplus loop, and the stiff beast shuffled away in a rickety trot. Just as he was passing around the bend in the cañon, the rider looked back over his shoulder. The night was lighted by a big moon and many stars. In the light stood the still figure of Higgins; above him rose the tall, white cliff; beside him was the tent that sheltered Little Annie.

In deference to the official importance of his guest, Tom Walton broke off his pleasant communion with his pipe, in the "office" of the Walton House, and came out and personally assisted the Deputy Collector to dismount and unsaddle.

"I expected you to bring a friend to supper with you," said he, with a knowing grin. "What's become of the jumper?"

"Gone!" said the Deputy Collector.

WHY THE POMPIERS WEAR SABRES*

BY ABBE CARTER GOODLOE

Looking back now it seems to me that from the first day I reached Tours, with an unmistakable American accent and a copy of Mr. Henry James' "A Little Tour in France," in my hand-bag, I heard a great deal about "*les pompiers*." I expended a good deal of thought over what "*les pompiers*" might be, though my curiosity was of too languid a nature to induce me to extract my faithful "*Spiers et Surenné*" from the bottom of my trunk. I might have continued in my state of reprehensible and callous ignorance, had not circumstances favored me.

One night I was rudely awakened from my "first, sweet sleep" by a most remarkable beating of drums and blowing of fifes, mingled with cries, which I was too sleepy to think of trying to comprehend. In fact I was under the delusion that I was in America and that it was the night of a Presidential election and both the Republican and Democratic processions, with their chiefs at their heads, were passing my window at the same time. Having thus satisfactorily explained the deafening confusion to myself, I promptly went in for a second "sweet sleep."



The next morning, however, the Presidential theory no longer seeming feasible, I asked Monsieur for an explanation of the late commotion. With gestures and expressions of which Monsieur alone is master, he recounted the in-

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cidents of the previous night, and amid a lurid and ornate description of the burning of the *gymnase*, the loss to education in France thereby entailed; and the misfortune to Tours from an architectural point of view, I received a full and satisfactory answer to my question, "What are the *pompiers*?"

I discovered, to my amazement, that they were the firemen of Tours and were very remarkable men indeed, differing in every essential respect from our heroes of engine and hose-carriage. With the inherent French thirst for glory, these *pompiers* scorn to accept payment from a local government but just able to support the municipal theatre, and dedicate their services freely to their city for their city's good.

Then with the native, sanguine temperament, they scout the idea of remaining in any given place, waiting tamely for a fire to break out, as is the ignoble custom among us; but, putting all their faith in an anti-incendiary Providence, they joyously pursue their varied vocations.

When, however, it unfortunately happens that a conflagration breaks out, two or three of these self-constituted protectors procure drums, fifes and horns and proceed up and down the streets beating "*la générale*"—the remarkable noise so closely resembling a political brass band which I had heard. This is to let the inhabitants know that a fire is "on;" and from the way the people flock to the flames one is inclined to think that a good deal of the Parsee is extant in the modern Frenchman. In the meantime the rest of the self-constituted firemen, before devoting their energies to the fire (which by this time is well under way), rush to their several homes, don magnificent brass-buttoned coats, helmets and, *mirabile dictu*, a long and formidable sabre.

Not long after this memorable conflagration I had the pleasure of seeing several *pompiers* in full uniform, and I then fully understood the respect and admiration universally felt for them, but I could not understand the reason for the sabre. I thought about it by day, and I lay awake long hours over it at night. No one had ever seen a *pompier* use a sabre, and it seemed to me that a long thing like that, dangling about their legs, would be a great impediment to quick movement. Positively I could not conjure up the ghost of a *raison d'être* for that sabre.

"It is so simple," I mournfully concluded, "that I have no hot way beyond it in my conjectures."

I tried to think calmly about it and simply, but the more I thought the more hopelessly entangled I became in a whole labyrinth of tortuous reasonings. My rest became broken and my appetite capricious. After a while I grew alarmed about myself. "Is it possible," I thought, "that my brain is not capable of resolving so simple a problem? I presume any peasant in Touraine could tell me why a *pompier* wears a sabre," and with that a bright idea came to me.

I had naturally wished not to expose my ignorance by inquiring of Monsieur or Madame the answer to the conundrum with which I had been torturing myself, but what was to prevent my asking Jeanne? Nothing. I determined to speak to Jeanne on the subject. If anybody in the whole valley of the Loire knew the reason, Jeanne would be that person I felt sure. She was my old Touranian servant, and a perfect encyclopedia of things worth knowing. She knew where the sweetest violets were to be found, how to make the best *pâté de foie gras*, where to find kindling wood to last her the whole Winter, the names of most of the stars, how to patch a coat for the innumerableth time, and a whole host of other bits of information. The question of her age had perplexed me only a degree less than the sabres of the *pompiers*. Judging by her stories and personal reminiscences she must have been a hundred and fifty or so; in appearance she seemed about seventy-five, and in actions and energy she could not have been over twenty.



As she "made" my room, she clattered in a pair of noisy sabots and talked incessantly in a frightful patois, which threatened for a while to totally demoralize my pronunciation of the Gallic tongue. Having determined to go to the fountain-head of knowledge and propound to

Jeanne my all-absorbing question, I lost no time in doing so.

The next day when she appeared with her duster and wax and her cheery "*Bonjour, Mademoiselle! Mon Dieu*, but it's a fine day!" I met her advances most politely. I had frequently been under the necessity of checking her flow of conversation, but that morning I let her talk on uninterruptedly.

When she went to the balcony to water my heliotropes, I followed her and said softly, "Jeanne, why do the *pompiers* wear sabres?"

"*Mon Dieu!* Mademoiselle. What a *drôle* question!"

"I know you think it a silly question," I said humbly, "and I suppose you have known all your life, but *why* do they wear them, Jeanne?"

"*Mon Dieu*, Mademoiselle," she said pityingly, "its simply because they are *pompiers*, for I never saw a *pompier* yet who did not wear one and I'll be seventy-nine come Toussaint. They always have worn sabres and I hope they always will, the brave men! *Mon Dieu!* Mademoiselle," she cried in sudden alarm, "I hope the government is not going to take away their sabres! *Quel dommage!*" Jeanne was an enthusiastic Bonapartist and was prepared to believe M. Carnot and his government capable of any depravity. I hastened to assure her that the Republic had nothing to say about the sabres of the *pompiers*, and retreated to reflect upon her answer which did not seem lucid to me. I had expected something different from Jeanne.

The next day I had to go to a little "*magasin de tabac*," to buy some stamps for my American letters. I knew the shop well. It was a little box of a place, with cheery aspect, which never failed to attract the loungers of the Tranchée. The proprietor of this favorite haunt — *Père Cotrie* — was renowned among his satellites for his intellectual superiority of which, I must confess, his external appearance gave no indication. As I walked slowly towards *Père Cotrie's* my thoughts kept running on the sabres of the *pompiers*. "I might ask the *Père Cotrie*, he would be sure to know," I thought as I entered.

I found ranged around the room the usual number of modest *rentiers* of the Tranchée and our queer, good-natured post-man with his leather satchel.

Père Cotrie hastened behind his little counter and, while



he tore me off the stamps, we exchanged the compliments of the day.

"It is a fine day, *n'est-ce pas*, Père Cotrie?"

"Oui, oui, Mademoiselle. Here on the Tranchée it is fine, but down in the city there is a fog —!"

There was an incipient feud between the dwellers on the Tranchée and those of the city, and the climatic superiority of the Tranchée was forever flaunted before the befogged inhabitants of "*au delà du pont*."

"Have you heard the news, Mademoiselle?"

"No, what is it?"

"The Lycée burned to the ground last night."

"Indeed, *Quel dommage!* And the brave firemen! There was no one hurt, was there?"

"Happily, no, *Mademoiselle*."

"And that reminds me, Père Cotrie, could you tell me why the *pompiers* wear sabres?" (pretending to be busy with my stamps).

"*Sapristi!* Mademoiselle. . . What a *drôle* question!"

"Yes, isn't it?" I rejoined rather weakly, "but *why* do they?"

"*Mon Dieu, Mademoiselle*," he replied, smoothing down his clean blue blouse, "it must be because it is a part of their uniform. Yes, now I think of it, the sabre is certainly a part of their uniform."

The assembled Tourangeaux nodded their heads in confirmation of their chief's sage words and repeated slowly and with conviction. "Yes, it is because the sabre is certainly a part of their uniform."

I thanked Père Cotrie and taking up my letters went out into the bright sunshine of the Tranchée. "They wear the sabre because it is a part of their uniform. That must be the reason since they all say so," I thought, "but —!"

A few days after my visit to Père Cotrie's, I took one of the drives which always horrified my friends so (thereby incidentally adding to my pleasure). My carriage was Eugénie's cart — Eugénie who brought us the nicest, freshest vegetables in all Touraine and who was herself as fresh and healthy looking as one of her own rosy apples. She was so dainty and trim that I used always to think of Dr. Holmes's "Clemence" when I saw her, and I would quote sentimentally,

Ah, Clemence when I saw thee last
Trip down the *rue de Seine*,"

only there was no *rue de Seine*, only the Tranchée.

In the afternoon the cart was made clean and the rough-coated, rebellious little pony adorned with enormous red pompons at each ear and a perfect chime of bells tied around his thick, shaggy neck; and off we would start for a drive through the lovely valley of the Loire—"le jardin de la France."

Our pleasure on such occasions had but one drawback. The drive usually consisted of a succession of shocks occasioned by the violent and sudden stoppage of the pony at various gate-ways along the route. He never comprehended that being so earnestly requested to stop at those places in the morning he was doing wrong in repeating the performance in the afternoon.



In one of the intervals of enjoyment between gates, it suddenly occurred to me that Eugénie might be able to tell me why the *pompier*s wore sabres.

"Eugénie," I said, turning to her with a most seductive smile, "Can you tell me why the *pompier*s wear sabres?"

Eugénie, showing all her pretty white teeth, began to laugh immoderately. I interposed hastily.

"I know it seems strange to you that I have not guessed the reason for it, but indeed I cannot. Why do they, Eugénie?"

"*Dame!* Mademoiselle asks very *drôle* questions!" and with that she commenced to laugh again. At that instant the unteachable pony made one of his precipitate halts on his two legs nearest the cart, and after the customary punishment had been inflicted and we had once more started on, Eugénie began laughing again.

"*Sapristi*, Mademoiselle! the *pompier*s must wear sabres because the soldiers do—if you notice it is almost impossible to tell a *pompier* from a soldier, so much do they resemble each other."

"And is that the true reason, Eugénie?" I demanded.

"Without a doubt, Mademoiselle," she responded with a decisive little motion of the mouth and chin.



After that a profound silence was always maintained between us on that subject of the *pompiers* and their sabres.

The weather turned chilly soon after that. The little garden began to look deserted; the hardy roses ceased to bloom, and the white anemones trembled from their long stems and lay upon the ground like scattered snowflakes blown out of the north. Even the perfumed wood-strawberries disappeared. We began to think of winter and the fireside. The little *ramoneurs* with blackened faces, the very sign and symbol of their office, were seen everywhere in the streets crying their trade, and one day madame captured one of these little blackbirds and ordered him up (or down) the chimneys.

He was a curious little specimen, frail and small to an astonishing degree, with that look of precocious intelligence and mischief so often seen in faces of the young who are already bread-winners.

I was out in the garden trying to warm myself in the mild sunshine when the little *ramoneur* finished. I felt in a communicative mood and called to him.

"Come here, Jean!"

"Mademoiselle," he said politely standing before me, and twisting in his dirty little hands the last remnants of a crownless and almost brimless hat.

"What do you do for a living, Jean?" I asked, trying to induce him to talk.



"*Ramoneur*," he answered, briefly.

"What's that?" I said, pretending not to understand.

"Well, Mademoiselle—*Ma foi!* I don't know how to explain to Mademoiselle. I'm the opposite of a *pompier*. I make fires burn and *they* put them out," he answered, with a comically intelligent expression.

"O! the *pompiers!*" I exclaimed. "That reminds me—Jean can you tell me why the *pompiers* wear sabres?"

"Why the *pompiers* wear sabres?" he repeated, and then he began to laugh. "*Sapristi*, Mademoiselle! but that is a fine question!"

"Yes, Jean, I have no doubt it is very amusing to you, but *why* do they wear them?"

"*Ma foi*, Mademoiselle," he replied, rubbing his short, curly locks, "it must certainly be because they have sabre-belts. You know a sabre-belt without a sabre would be so *drôle!*"

Jean appeared so entirely satisfied with this explanation that I had not the heart to say anything, so I gave him three *sous*, whereupon he made a bow and muttering rapidly "*Merçi, Mademoiselle. Bonjour, Mademoiselle,*" he retired with an almost magical alacrity.

As I sauntered through the courtyard into the house I made a solemn vow to myself to forget all about the *pompiers* and their sabres.



I was reading an old French history yesterday and I came upon this: "There being no 'gardiens' (police) for the towns in those days, it was deemed prudent that the *pompiers* should exercise the functions of keepers of the public peace, and to that end they were provided with sabres, as a weapon of both offence and defence, which custom is continued to these days."

HIS SISTER*

BY C. M. FLANDRAU

Harvard University

Jared Townsend's mood depended largely on the weather.

That afternoon the weather, as is frequent in Cambridge, was dark and sullen. Townsend had tried to study, but the light was poor and it was too absurdly early for the lamps. He had cut the leaves of a new book and had drummed for a time on his piano, and finally had found himself standing with his back to the spluttering coal fire looking, with an expression of resigned sadness, at a photograph in his hand. It was the likeness of a young girl, and on the back of the card was written in small, sharp letters, "For J. L. T. from his devoted sister, H. G. T." He stared at it a long time, then walked across the room, tossed it into an empty little drawer in his desk and returned to the fire. The mechanical way in which he did this, and the fact that he did not allow his thoughts to dwell on the photograph when he could no longer see it, suggested that the performance was of frequent occurrence.

It was strange, he reflected, that after more than a year of Cambridge these dreary New England days should have an effect on him, but they always did unless he had some one amusing to talk to, which was decidedly not the case now. That was another bore of living in rooms, however nice, in a house on Kirkland street, instead of in one of the dormitories. There was so little congeniality among the men in that house. What interest, for example, could he take in the three law men, who talked of nothing but "Torts," and "Demurrers," and "Quasi-contracts," or the eccentric millionaire on the second floor, or the Freshman in the other entry, whom, by the way, he had never taken the trouble to call on. This was rather rude, come to think of it. The Freshman had been there since college opened,—almost two months now, and Townsend hardly knew what he looked like. Why not drop in on him to-day?

*The author of this clever sketch of College life has been awarded the prize. Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

In a moment this idle thought seemed like a positive inspiration, and without giving his impulse time to subside,—always a dangerous course for him to follow,—Townsend strode out of his room and went thundering down three flights of stairs, through the cellar, and up again into the other part of the house.

The card on the door of room number six read, "Mr. Austin Page." Townsend paused, before knocking, to take breath and wait for some one inside who was playing the violin with a remarkably sweet, sympathetic touch, to finish.

"Come in."

People did not often have time to bid one enter in the amiable, musical drawl with which Townsend's knock was answered. He hoped that the violin and the voice might belong to the same man, and he was not disappointed, for when he opened the door the Freshman came across the room with his violin in one hand and said, "I'm very glad to see you," in the same voice.

"Yes, my name is Page," the Freshman was saying, "and these—these fragments on the sofa are my cousin, Mr. Hammond."

"I've been playing football," said the patched and bandaged giant indicated, elevating a long arm. "Excuse my left hand, and please don't ask me what class I'm in—everybody does—because I'm not in any."

"I wouldn't for worlds," answered Townsend good-humorously, wondering, as he shook hands, why this greeting had not struck him as abominably "fresh."

Townsend's visit in no way resembled his preconceived ideas of what it would be like. On the several occasions that he had meditated going to see Page, he had invariably pictured himself finding a lonely boy surrounded by a great deal of uncomfortably new oak furniture that smelt of the carpenter shop. Instead of this he was in a room that did not hurt his feelings as most college studies did, and instead of the anticipated smell of varnish, he was conscious every now and then of a deliciously elusive odor of violets. He was being entertained in an amiable, self-assured sort of way by a delicate looking fellow with clear-cut features and tired brown eyes.

The clash between the presentiment and the reality had left Townsend rather conversationless at first, but realizing

suddenly that, after all, he was a Sophomore, he talked more than either of the others.

Suddenly, during a pause, after a long and somewhat persistent discussion on football, he broke out in his impulsive way with:

"Do tell me where those violets are? I've been getting the most heavenly whiffs from them ever since I sat down, and I don't see them anywhere."

"Neither do I," said Page, laughing and looking puzzled.

"Are you sure you don't mean arnica?" asked Hammond from the sofa, lifting his right arm with considerable effort.

"No, really," answered Townsend, getting up and sniffing about the room like a dog in a granary. "I don't see how you can help smelling them."

"Oh, I do now," exclaimed Page, who had also risen and and was wandering round with his nose haughtily in the air.

"It's strongest just here where you are sitting."

"Say, old man, throw me over my coat, will you, please," said Hammond impatiently. "It's on the back of that chair—the one Mr. Townsend was in. I mustn't get cold in this infernal arm."

Page took the coat and was about to spread it over Hammond's arm and shoulder, when he stopped short with a quick movement of comprehension and raised it slowly to his face.

"Here are the violets," he said, pressing his nose against the lapel, "or, rather, here is where they were not so very long ago."

"What a dead give away," laughed Townsend, as he leaned over and inhaled deeply. "I feel just like the man in the play who detects the wicked countess by the perfume she uses. Now the proper thing for you to do is to tell us her name," and he sat down on the edge of the sofa.

Page, whose face had suddenly become very serious, drew up the corners of his mouth and showed his teeth for an instant, as if these were the only requisites of a successful smile. Hammond's face and neck were slowly changing to the color of the crimson pillow on which they rested.

"You two think that because you've pressed the button-hole, I'll do the rest," he said with a feeble air of unconcern. "Well, I sha'n't."

"I've got no end of cheek, don't you think, to come down and tease a sick man this way," said Townsend, in-

stantly aware of a distinct change in the atmosphere and judging it wise to withdraw. "Come and see me when you're better and make this man bring along his violin. I've got a lot of duets and things in my own room." A minute or two more and he was standing before his own fire, just as if he had not left it for an hour, and stirred up some kind of a row between two rather interesting new men.

That was the beginning, and Townsend, who was given to speculating on the accident of college friendships, wondered idly what the middle and end of it would be like. Both came sooner than he expected.

On the following afternoon, as he was writing at his desk, there was a knock on his door and Hammond entered. Townsend was rather surprised at the alacrity with which his invitation of the day before had been accepted, especially as the boy looked pale and ill and sank heavily into the first chair he came to.

"You'll think me an awful fool," Hammond said abruptly, as he leaned back and closed his eyes for a moment. "I ought to be in bed, but I've got something on my mind, something that must be attended to right away. I can't ask Austin—I don't know why, but I simply can't. His brother, my cousin, that is, is my guardian, you know, and if he were to find out about it,"—the horrors of this possibility were apparently so numerous and confused that Hammond was unable to express them in words.

The Harvard man's ordinary attitude of unimpulsive politeness in the presence of anything bordering on the emotional, failed to show itself this time. Townsend could not repress a great, and he feared a crudely western, sympathy for anything so young and big and so evidently in pain and trouble.

"I'll do anything I can for you—gladly," he said, taking a seat near Hammond. "But before you tell me about it, don't you think you can find some one better able to advise you, some one you've known longer? I'm sure Page would be better than I am—he looks so clever and kind."

"He is, he is," assented Hammond hurriedly. "He's no end of a brick; you don't know how much I care for him. But you saw how he looked yesterday when he found out about the violets. He guessed where they came from, and I never can lie to him. I don't know any one else here," he went on to explain. "If I were only in college it would be

different—I'm coming next year. But I go to a school, in Cambridge, now where they're all babies. I've been lonely, horribly lonely—I never saw America before a year ago and I hate it all. That's why I've spent every cent I got on Mrs. Vernon Vaughan. She's not a lady, she isn't even respectable—but she's been good to me and she speaks French. I've given her most all of my allowance for four months and pawned my watch and my scarf-pins, and now she says Boston is slow and writes that she will tell my guardian all about everything if I don't give her money so she can go away. Read the letter, and tell me what to do."

Hammond had made his confession in the headlong way of a child eager to be through with something unpleasant, and it had relieved him inexpressibly to confide in someone who looked grown up and discreet and rather worldly. He had taken the first disagreeable plunge and now he felt that he could swim along quite easily. He told Townsend a great many things during the half hour he sat there—how Austin had once paid all his debts for him and had then asked him never to see Mrs. Vernon Vaughan again; how he hadn't—for two weeks; how he wished that he knew some nice girls in Cambridge, but not like the ones he had met at a "tea" given by the wife of his school teacher—they were so oppressively proper; how cruel it was to bring up a boy abroad and expect him to be a patriotic American; and how very beautiful Mrs. Vernon Vaughan was.

"Where is she from?" asked Townsend absently.

"Oh, I don't know," answered the other, trying to think. "She's been in Europe a lot, and in the west—California or some place like that."

Townsend was drumming nervously on the arm of his chair with his fingers.

"What does she look like?" he asked slowly.

"She's small and slight and awfully dark, and very, very,—"

Townsend rose suddenly and walked to the window.

"Did you say she wrote this letter?" he asked, looking down at the mauve-colored envelope that Hammond had given him.

"Yes,—it came to-day."

The man at the window silently scrutinized the address on the envelope and then drew out the delicate sheet of note

paper. The words "*Loyauté et Caprice*," were stamped at the top in silver, and the pages were filled with writing so fine that at the first glance it looked like German script. He went to his desk and took the photograph from the little drawer into which he had dropped it on the afternoon before, and compared the writing on the back with that of the letter.

"Do you know her?" asked Hammond coldly. "Is that her likeness?"

"Yes, I know her," said Townsend almost inaudibly, "this is her photograph. Don't worry about your guardian and all that. I shall not let,—she won't bother you any more," and he hid his face in his arms on the desk.



NAVAJO JOE

BY A. H. LEWIS (DAN QUIN)

Navajo Joe was out of luck. Ordinarily his vagaries were not regarded in Cinnabar. His frequent appearance in the single street in a voluntary of nice feats of horsemanship coupled with an exhibition of pistol shooting, in which old tomato cans and *passé* beer bottles performed as targets, had hitherto excited no more baleful sentiment in the Cinnabar bosom than disgust.

"Shootin' up the town a whole lot," was the name for this engaging pastime as given by Navajo Joe, and up to date the exercise had passed unchallenged.

But to-day it was different. Camps like individuals have moods; now light, now dark, and so it was with Cinnabar. Just at this time Cinnabar was experiencing a wave of virtue. This may have come spontaneously from the germs of order which, after all, dwelt sturdily in the Cinnabar breast. It might have been excited by the presence of a pale party of Eastern tourists, just now abiding at the O. K. hotel and who the rather sanguine sentiment of Cinnabar credited with meditating a large investment of treasure in her rocks and rills. But whatever the reason Cinnabar virtue was certainly aroused; a condition of the public mind which made it a bad day for Navajo Joe.

The angry sun smote hotly in the deserted causeway of Cinnabar. The public was within doors. The Gold Mine saloon and its sister hostels, the dance hall and the Full Blown Rose were thriving mightily. Those games known to the world as monte, high-ball and faro and which generally engrossed the public thought were drowsy and dull enough, but the counters whereat the citizens of Cinnabar gathered with his peers in absorption of the incautious drinks of the place, were fairly sloppy from an excess of trade. Notwithstanding the torrid heat, this need not sound strangely. Cinnabar leaning was strongly homeopathic.

Similia similibus curantur—like cures like

Said Cinnabar, and when it was blazing hot drank whisky.

But to-day there was further reason for this consumption.

Cinnabar was excited and this provoked a thirst. Navajo Joe, rendering himself prisoner to Jack Moore, rescue or no rescue, had, by order of that sagacious body, been conveyed by his captor before the vigilance committee and was about to be tried for his life.

What was Navajo Joe's immediate crime? Certainly not a grave one. Ten days before it would have hardly earned a comment. But to-day, in its spasm of virtue, and sensitive in its memories of the erratic courses of Navajo Joe afore-time, Cinnabar had gravely and grimly taken possession of that volatile gentleman for punishment. He had killed a Chinaman. It happened thus :

"Yere comes that prairie dog, Navajo Joe, all spraddled out," said Bill Tutt, a short half hour before. He was peering from the window of the Gold Mine saloon at the time, to which he had been drawn by the noise of hoofs, and there was a sense of injury disclosed in the tone, born of the awakened virtue of Cinnabar.

"It looks like this yere camp never can assoome no airs," said Rosewood Jim, in a distempered way, "but this yere miser'ble Joe comes chargin' up to queer it."

As he spoke, that offending personage unconscious of the great change in Cinnabar morals, swept up the street emitting gladsome and ecstatic whoops and whirling his pistol on his fore finger like a wheel of light. A tourist stood in the door of the hotel smoking a pipe in short, brief puffs of astonishment and reviewed the amazing performance. Navajo Joe at once and abruptly halted, and, gazing for a disgruntled moment on the man from the East, took the pipe from its owner's horrified mouth and placed it in his own.

"Smokin' of pipes," he vouchsafed in condemnatory explanation, "is onelegant and degradin,' an' don't you do it no more in my presence. I'm mighty sensitive that away about pipes an' I don't aim to tolerate 'em; none whatever."

This solution of his motives seemed entirely satisfactory to Navajo Joe. He sat puffing and gazing at the man bereaved, while the latter stood dumbly staring with a morsel of the ravished meerschaum still between his lips. What further might have flowed in the way of oratory or overt acts may not be stated, for the thoughts of the guileless Joe suddenly received a new direction. Just then a Chinaman, volumin-

ously robed, emerged from the New York store whither he had been drawn by dint of soap.

"Whatever is this yere suds-sloppin' Mongol doin' in camp I'd like for to know?" inquired Navajo Joe disdainfully. "I shore leaves orders when I'm yere last for the immejit removal of all sech."

"Oh, well," he continued in tones of weary and bitter reflection, "I'm the only public sperited man in camp, so all this yere work falls nacheral to me. I'll jest have to make an example of this perticler specimen to let 'em know whatever a Caucasian is, anyhow."

Then came the short, emphatic utterance of a six-shooter, a puff of smoke which vanished quickly in the hot air and the next census was short one Asiatic. Navajo Joe had shot the Chinaman to death.

Then came the brief order from Armstrong, the chief of the vigilance committee, to Jack Moore. That gentleman proffered a Winchester first and a request second; and Navajo Joe, realizing fate, at once surrendered.

"Of course, gents," said Armstrong, apologetically, as he convened the vigilance committee in the New York store, "I don't say this yere Joe is bein' held for beefin' the Chinaman sole an' alone, the fact is, he's been havin' a mighty sight too gay a time of late, an' so I thinks it's a good, safe play—bein' as it's a hot day an' we has the time—to sorter call the committee together an' ask its views, whether we better hang this yere Navajo Joe yet or not?"

"Mr. President," responded Bill Tutt, "if I'm in order an' jest to get the sense of the meetin' to flowin' easy an' smooth, I moves you we take this yere Navajo Joe an' proceeds to stretch him a whole lot. I ain't basin' this yere on no defunct Chinaman nor nuthin' in partic'ler, but jest lettin' it fly under the general head of good of the order."

"Do I hear any remarks?" asked Armstrong. "If not I shall take Mr. Tutt's very excellent motion as the census of this yere meetin' an' it's hang she is."

"Not intendin' no interruption," said Texas Thomson, "I wants to say this. I'm a quiet man myse'f, an' wants to keep Cinnabar a quiet place wherein to pass my declinin' years. For which-all I shorely favors a hangin' of Navajo Joe. He's given us a heap of trouble. I'm like Bill Tutt I don't make no p'int on this yere dead Chinaman; we spares

him too easy. But this Joe is allers a ridin' an' a yellin' an' a shootin' up the camp till I'm clean tired out. So I says, let's hang him, an' suggests as a eligible place the windmill out back of the dance hall."

"Yes," said Armstrong, "the windmill is upholstered for jest sech plays, an' as delays is aggravatin' the committee might as well canter over right now an' get this yere done by daylight, an'—"

"See yere, Mr. President," inquired Navajo Joe in a tone of truculent inquiry, "don't I get no hand in this yere? What for a deal is this, I rises to ask, anyhow?"

"You can gamble this yere is a squar' American game," said Armstrong confidently. "You're entitled to your say when the committee is done. Jest stand your hand now an' we'll deal to you in a minute."

"Well, I jest wants to know if I'm in on this play, that's all," said Navajo Joe.

"Gents," said Rosewood Jim, who had sat silently listening, "I'm with you on this yere hangin'. Any attempt on my part to p'int out those features in the daily life of this camp as makes me tired might seem invidious an' I don't aim to do it none. But we've got to do somethin' in the way of takin' a good, firm, moral step. I takes it, hangin' Joe will fill the pree-scription. These Eastern men is yere in our midst, it'll impress 'em that Cinnabar means business an' is a good safe, quiet camp. They'll carry reports East as will do us credit an' thar you be. As to the propriety of stringin' Joe, there need be no doubt. If the Chinaman ain't enough, if assaultin' of a innocent tenderfoot ain't enough, you can bet he's done plenty beside as merits a lariat. He wouldn't deny it himse'f, if you asks him."

There was a silence succeeding the rather spirited address of Rosewood Jim and at last Armstrong broke it by inquiring of Navajo Joe if he had anything to offer.

"I reckon it's your play now, Navajo," he said, "so come a-runnin'."

"Well," said Navajo Joe disgustedly, "these yere proceedin's makes me sick. I shore objects to this yere hangin' idee an' all for a meanly Chinaman, too. This yere camp of Cinnabar is a-gettin' a mighty sight too stylish for me. It's gettin' that per-dad-binged-tic-ler it can't take its reg'ler drinks, an'—"

"Stop right thar," said Armstrong with dignity. "Don't cuss the chair, none, cause the chair won't have it. It's a parliamentary law if anyone cusses the chair he's out of order, same as its law that all chips on the floor goes to the house, an' when a man's out of order once, that settles it. He can't talk no more that meetin'. Seein' we're aimin' to hang you, we won't claim no rule on you this time, but be careful how you come trackin' 'round; an' don't crowd us. You *sabe*? Don't crowd us none."

"Well, I won't crowd you," retorted Navajo Joe, "I don't have to crowd you. What I says is this: I s'pose I sees fifty men stretched by committees between yere and Oregon an' I never sees a man get roped yet on account of no Chinaman. An' I offers a side bet of a hundred even it ain't law to hang people on account of downin' a Chinaman. But you all seems sot on this thing an' I'll tell you what I'll do. I'm a plain, everyday sport an' thar's no filigree work on me, but if it's all congenial to the gents here assembled—not puttin' it on the grounds of no miserable pigtales, but just to meet public sentiment half-way—I'll gamble my life, hang or no hang, on the first ace turned from the box, an' Rosewood deal. Is it a go?"

Cinnabar tastes were bizarre. A proposition, original and new, found in its very novelty a strong argument for Cinnabar favor. So the unusual offer of Navajo Joe to stake his life on a turn at faro was approvingly criticised. The general disposition agreed, and even the resolute Armstrong saw no good reason to object.

"Navajo Joe," said Armstrong, "we don't have to do this, yere or take this chance, an' it's a-makin' of a mighty bad precedent as may tangle us yereafter, but Cinnabar goes you this time. Rosewood turn the cards for an ace."

"Turn squar,' Rosewood," said Navajo Joe with an air of interest. "You wouldn't go for to sand no deck nor run a brace yere agin perishin' flesh an' blood, would you?"

"Well, I should shore say not," replied Rosewood; "I wouldn't do it for money an' you can bet I don't do it now when the epeesode comes more under the head of a picnic."

"Well, then," says Navajo Joe, "roll your game." I plays it open."

"I dunno," said Bill Tutt meditatively, "but I'm thinkin' I'd a-coppered."

The turn proceeded, and as may happen in the interesting device named faro, a split occurred. Two aces came together.

"Ace lose, ace win," said Rosewood. "Whatever be we a-goin' to do now, I'd like for to know?"

"Gents," said Armstrong with dignity, "a split like this yere creates a doubt, an' it's law that doubts go to the prisoner, same as a maverick goes to the first man as runs his brand onto him. This yere camp of Cinnabar abides by the law and Navajo Joe goes free. However, he should remember this little graze and restrain his fun-makin' methods yereafter. Some of them ways of his leads straight to everlasting life, an' if he's wise, he alters his play from now on."

"So the camp really lose an' this yere cuss goes free," said Jack Moore, dejectedly. "I allers was agin faro as a game; whar we all misses it is, we don't play him freeze-out."



THE MASTER OF THE "CHRYSLITE"* •

BY G. B. O'HALLORAN

Captain Anderson stood alone in the world. But he was one who *could* stand alone, for his will was strong and his affections were weak. Those who thought they knew him best said he was hardy. The remainder said he was hard, his heart a stone. Still he was a human being, for like others, he cherished hobbies. His hobbies, however, were not of that class which is compassed about by rest and roses. Instead, they were clothed with a stern delight born of defiance and danger. To work his ship across the Bay in the teeth of an adverse gale; to weather a lee shore; to master a rebellious crew single-handed—these were the wild diversions which satisfied him. Once, in the China seas, his men grew mutinous; said the ship was "leaking like a lobster-pot," and straightway put her about for Singapore; swore they did not care what the skipper thought, in fact would like to talk to him a bit. The skipper was below when the first mate brought down the news and a very pale face as well.

"Tell the men to muster!"

So soon as the mate's back was turned, John Anderson took a revolver from a locker and charged it; then, ascending the companion ladder, he walked to the break of the poop, with his hands buried in the pockets of a peajacket. Down below him were the men, lolling about in a sullen crowd on the weather side of the quarter-deck. They were thirty or forty in number, and were a vicious-looking set.

"Now then, my men! Half an hour ago we were steering due north-east. Who was it dared to lay the ship's nose the other way?"

The burly boatswain swung his way out of the crowd, planted his foot on the first step of the poop ladder, and stared up at the captain.

"I did, and be damned to you!" roared he. There was a loud report. The boatswain dropped, shot in the leg. And the crew shivered under a gleaming eye and a gleaming weapon.

*A story of the sea. From "The Gentleman's Magazine."

"All hands 'bout ship!" cried the master. The wounded boatswain, raising himself for a moment on one hand, piped faintly and fell back unconscious. But the men were already at their stations, and in five minutes more the *Chrysolite* was heading north-east again.

Such incidents as these gave John Anderson an unenviable reputation amongst sailors. It was seldom that the same crew served him twice. Two voyages under this tartar were more than could be stood, and from his subordinates, therefore, he gained nothing but hatred and fear.

It was very difficult, then, to find out where Captain Anderson's weakness lay. Everybody, of course, has his weakness. But this man appeared to be all strength. His whole life seemed like a rod of burnished steel—a passion-proof life, a fire-proof rod. The owners of the *Chrysolite*, Messrs. Ruin & Ruin, of Billiter street, piqued themselves on knowing his tender point. He was avaricious, thought they; he would do much for money, and they would some day try him in the furnace. It was true, indeed, that the old sailor had amassed considerable wealth during his frequent voyages to the East. It was true also that he was sparing and saving; that he drove bargains to the verge of perdition, and clinched them at the crucial moment. But it was equally true that he was free from fraud. His teas were what they pretended to be, his silks unimpeachable, and no man ever came back upon him with complaints of their genuineness. The world allowed that he was at least commercially honorable, but felt fully convinced that he was eaten up with the desire for gold.

But the world was wrong. The captain himself was sometimes given to metaphysical speculation, and even *he* was puzzled to know if his heart had a whit more feeling than any other pumping-engine. Women he looked upon as frivolities of vanity to which he could not reconcile his stern nature; and men he regarded as instruments to be rigorously disciplined, not failing at the same time to discipline himself. His heart was of no use to him except to circulate his blood. In default, therefore, of loving anything, he fell naturally to pursuing a difficult task—the piling up of a mountain of gold. This was congenial solely because it was difficult, and difficulties overcome were his only sources of satisfaction.

Now it happened that a new firm trading to the East, in competition with Messrs. Ruin & Ruin, had made advances

to Captain Anderson with a view to engaging him in their service; and as they offered liberal terms, including a handsome percentage, it was not long before the old seaman was won over. Here is a chance, thought he, of heaping up my mountain so much the more quickly, and I am determined that my actions shall not be hampered by sentiment. Notwithstanding this last threat, he found it a very unpleasant thing to break with his old employers, one of whose ships he had commanded for a score of years. But he would get scot free of them before he finally concluded negotiations with the new people. And so it came to pass that one morning he walked along Billiter street with his twenty-year-old commission in his pocket.

It is curious how fond real old salts are of dress when ashore. Here was John Anderson in a top hat and kid gloves, looking anything but at home in them. The glossy hat was a mockery to his bold sea-worn face, and his big knuckles were almost bursting through the soft kid with indignation at the affront put upon them.

He reached the chambers in which the firm of Messrs. Ruin & Ruin was established, and ascended the staircase—for the office was on the second floor. The senior partner was within, and the captain was admitted into his room without delay.

"Glad to see you, Captain Anderson," said Mr. Ruin in an unusually cordial tone, at the same time shaking hands. "You've made a capital passage, and freighted the *Chrysolite* well."

Mr. Ruin was a big fat man, who spoke oilily. His clean-shaven face was never without the remnants of a smile—a smile, though, which was not remarkable for its sincerity. Still, it had its value—in the market—for it was a commercial smile. A pair of small grey eyes were almost hidden by the obese curves of his checks; but you learned in a very short time that they kept a sharp and shrewd lookout from behind those ramparts. The two men sat down at opposite sides of the table, the owner guessing from the Captain's manner that there was something in the wind, and the captain thinking his employer's exuberance of civility betokened more than was manifest.

"Yes, I brought her a quick passage," replied Anderson. Then, looking straight at the owner, "and it's the last she'll make under me."

The remnants of a smile coalesced, ploughing up Mr. Ruin's cheeks into greasy furrows.

"My dear captain, we could not hear of it! We're too old friends to part like that."

"Well, sir, I've come this morning, for private reasons, to throw up my commission," said the captain, simultaneously throwing down his commission before the senior partner's eyes.

"I can't accept it, Mr. Anderson; I can't, indeed," replied the owner, picking up the parchment. "And I'll tell you why. My brother and I have been thinking matters over, and we've really been obliged to confess, for conscience' sake, that the *Chrysolite* is getting old."

"Devilish old!" muttered the captain, forgetting himself for a moment.

"Well, now I think of it again, I believe my brother did say she was 'devilish old'—a strange coincidence. Still she is a fine model of a boat. What d'ye think yourself?"

"She has rare lines," said the other, with a slight approach to grave enthusiasm.

"The very remark I made myself only yesterday. Yes, we agreed she was a pretty boat; and I admit, from sheer sentiment, I cannot bear to think of her being chopped up for firewood. So inharmonious, don't you think?"

The old sailor looked sullen, and said nothing.

Mr. Ruin leant his elbows well on to the table in a confidential manner, and reduced his voice to husky whispering.

"My brother told me he should not mind seeing her end her days as a picturesque wreck, but to sell her for matchwood was barbarous. I was really of the same opinion. And—and—couldn't it be managed for her, Captain Anderson?"

The two looked at each other narrowly. "If you can get anyone to do it, of course it can be done. But *I* would sooner——"

"Now before you judge, hear me, captain. I feel sure you could find that man if you chose. See, the *Chrysolite* is insured in the Jupiter Insurance Company for £9,000. Here is the policy. And the man that saves her from the axe, and makes a picturesque wreck of her, will earn the gratitude of Messrs. Ruin & Ruin, and £3,000 besides."

For once even the remnants of a smile had disappeared from the senior partner's face, and he stood confessed—the type of a cool financial scoundrel.

The sailor, on the other hand, was agitated as no one had ever seen him before. The veins stood out on his brawny throat like rope. His eyelids were purple. For a few moments his head swam. Then he righted himself as suddenly, with an emphatic refusal ready on his lips. But the wily partner had left the room. This gave Anderson time to think, and the more he thought the more that pile of gold forced itself before him, until forsooth he fell to thinking how such an end *could* be compassed—by another commander. He saw clearly that a skillful seaman might achieve this thing with slight danger to himself and his crew. And all this time the three thousand pounds shone so lustroously that his moral vision was dazzled, and the huge iniquity of the whole affair was rapidly vanishing from sight.

When Mr. Ruin re-entered, Anderson was looking ashamed and guilty.

"Well, captain, can I help you to a conclusion!" came from the oily lips.

"It's this way," replied the old man, turning round but keeping his eyes fixed on the carpet, "I can't do it. No, I can't."

Mr. Ruin eyed him dubiously, and rubbed his chin gently. "I'm sorry—very, very sorry! £3,000 won't go long begging though. And I shall have to accept your resignation, captain."

Anderson only took up his hat and walked slowly out of the room. He had not descended many steps, when he turned back and re-opened the door.

"No, sir," he said, "it can't be done. I must think it over, and—no—it can't be done." With that he went his way, miserable.

The same night he received a letter by post. It contained his old commission, reinstating him in the command of the *Chrysolite*.

Four months later the *Chrysolite* was unloading a general cargo in Mauritius Harbor. Captain Anderson had thought it over.

The quay was quickly covered with Manchester bales and Birmingham cases; and it was not long before the tackle at the main yard arm was set a-clicking, as the baskets of sand-ballast were hove up to be poured into the empty hold.

No such luxuries were there as steam-winchcs; not any of those modern appliances for lightening labour. Instead, five or six hands plied the ponderous work at the winch handles, the labor being substantially aggravated by the heat of a vertical sun. A spell at the orthodox hand-winch in the tropics is an ordeal not to be lightly spoken of, and sailors have the very strongest objection to the work. It requires the utmost vigilance on the part of the captain, therefore, to prevent the feebler spirits from deserting. He was able, however, to reckon a full crew as he steered out of Port Louis harbor and shaped his course for Ceylon.

Some of the hands had grumbled at not having more liberty to go ashore. In an excess of passion Anderson made answer,—

"To your kennels, you dogs! I'll put you ashore soon enough, and I'll warrant you'll stay there longer than you care for."

It was indiscreet language, and the men puzzled over it. They concluded that the skipper meant to obtain their imprisonment at the next British port they should touch, for mutinous conduct, and knowing he was a man of his word they assumed their best behavior.

Captain Anderson had not changed for the better. Hitherto he had maintained a firmness of discipline boarding upon severity, and he certainly had never relaxed from that attitude. Now he had become an incomprehensible mixture of indulgence and cruelty. The two elements were incompatible, and the more intelligent of his officers were not long in perceiving that there was a vicious and variable wind in their superior's moral atmosphere, under which his canvas strained or flapped unaccountably. They imagined, to pursue their own figure, that his hand did not grasp the reason-tiller with its customary grip, and that his bark was left more or less to the conflicting guidance of other influences. Many a time since his departure from England had the old sailor been stung with remorse at the unwritten tenor of his present commission. He would frequently try to look the whole thing in the face—would endeavor to account for the acceptance of an office against which his whole self revolted. He would recite the interview in the Billiter Street Chambers with his employer, passing rapidly over the preliminary parts until he came to the *reward*. No! he was not false enough or eup-

hemistic enough to call it a reward; he would regard it as a bribe. But he could never get further. He always grounded on his reef of gold, and no tide of indignation or regret, no generous current of honor, had power to sweep him off again into the saving waters. Here the fierce rays of desire shot down upon the resplendent heap, whose reflected glory filled the whole vision of the water with its lustre. Blame him not too much, nor it. For after all man is but man, and gold is a thing of comfort.

But had Captain Anderson followed his mental inquiries to a conclusion, had he demonstrated to himself the depth of moral degradation into which he must be plunged, his pride would never have allowed him to do anything but redeem his unuttered word.

As an illustration of the captain's lately acquired habit of indulgence, the most remarkable was his treatment of the watch on deck during the night. The man on the look-out, for instance, was in the habit of going to sleep if the weather made it at all practicable. The rest of the watch, some fifteen or twenty hands, followed suit, or even skulked back into the fo'castle, there to stretch themselves out on their chests and smoke. These things the captain connived at, and the men were only too glad of the relief to inquire too curiously into his reasons. The main object of a sailing-ship sailor is to gain as much sleep as he can by whatever means, and in pursuit of this end he will evade even those duties which are most essential to the safety of the ship.

One night, during the middle watch, the captain came on deck, and took to walking up and down with the second mate. The night was clear, though dark. The *Chrysolite* was close-hauled on the starboard tack, and was making good headway under a clinking breeze. She was an old-fashioned, frigate-built, full-rigged ship, such as one seldom happens on now, her quarter-galleries, chain plates, to'-gallant bulwarks and single topsail yards being all out of date amongst the shipbuilders of to-day. It has been said that she had "rare lines," and the remark was just. A more imposing pile of timber was possibly never floated. She had plenty of beam to cope with the South Atlantic wave-giants, and not too much sheer. Her fiddle stem was gracefully cut, and harmonized to perfection with the slight rake aft of her lofty masts. Her spars, also, were finely proportioned to the

breadth of her hull. So that, with her canvas spread in an unwavering breeze, the *Chrysolite* was a stately creature and "a thing of beauty."

"Mr. Grant," said the captain addressing his subordinate officer, "be good enough to take a star and work out the ship's position."

The second mate quickly brought his sextant, and took the altitude of a star convenient for his purpose. He then went below to the cabin to perform his calculations. The look-out man, a ready sleeper, was in a heavy slumber, upon which the stiffening breeze made no effect. The rest of the watch had disappeared in the customary fashion. Captain Anderson was practically alone on deck.

He walked forward, leant over the weather rail, and directed his glass. He saw just exactly what he expected to see. There, right ahead in the distance, the binoculars showed a long, thin streak of sparkling silver, appearing like a lightning flash held fast between the darkness and the deep sea. It was phosphorescent water playing on a sand bank.

Anderson put the glass into his pocket. He was sullen and determined. He stood motionless for full half an hour, trying to repress the workings of an aroused conscience, but his thoughts would not let him alone. There was something behind them, some new sensations, which set them buzzing in his mind. These sensations were his finest feelings, ennobling emotions which had been cramped in the grip of discipline for forty years. He could not comprehend it, but he found himself pursuing a train of thoughts of finer sensibility than he had ever experienced, and in which the great bribe had no place. He foreshadowed in his mind's eye the tragic events over which he was now presiding. He foresaw the danger to life and limb with a fresh clearness of vision. He pictured to himself the possible agonies of his fellow creatures (never once thinking of his own) with a sentiment much akin to pity—strong, too, but not sufficiently strong to overcome that unbending pride which forbade him for honor's sake to go back upon his promise. Then there was the doom of the ship itself—

The man is not angry, much less fearful; but his lips are quivering and his nostrils widening with a passion hitherto unknown. He sees the picture vividly—a majestic, gallant ship done to destruction—a rich ruined seaman wandering on earth

with a broken heart in a dishonored bosom. Not only a gallant ship, but a lifelong pride and the fullness of a heart's desire swept recklessly into limbo. Here, at last, had his love revealed itself.

"No, by God, she *shall* not perish!"

With a rapid movement he gains the fo'castle, and roars into it: "All hands 'bout ship! Quick now, for your very lives!"

There is no mistaking his tone. It is not one of driving tyranny, but of urgent agony, and it goes right home to every man.

Up they tumble in a ready crowd, many in their shirts alone. They are all sleepy, but the business on hand will soon cure them of this.

They stand by, The helm is put down, and quickly the *Chrysolite* veers round in process of reaching the other tack. Will she do it? No! She trembles almost in the teeth of the wind, misses stays, and falls off again on to the old tack.

Anderson cannot understand it, old sailor as he is, puts the helm down once more; once more she misses.

"Back the mainyard! Shiver the foreyard!"

Soon every stitch of canvas on the mainmast is swung about to face the breeze, while that on the foremast is hauled in. Although she be going at eight knots, *that* should check her.

But it does not.

"Mizen-topsail braces, then!" Quick as thought the lee braces are slacked off, and those on the weather side made taut. Still she is not checked. Strange, too, for the breeze is stiff. Anderson feels she is in the stream of a strong current.

There had been no need to say what was the cause of danger. The heavy boom of breakers rose above the tread of feet, the clashing of spars, and the chorus of curses.

Meanwhile Mr. Grant has finished his calculations below. He has found for a result that the ship is among the Maldive reefs. He is certain there must be some error in his work, and he sets himself to revise his figures. But the breeze sweeps into the cabin with a faint command from the upper air—"Back the mainyard!"—and he shrewdly guesses that his calculations are correct.

The captain is everywhere at once urging and aiding. He sees the whole canvas aback, and yet the *Chrysolite* drifts on. He cannot 'bout his ship nor back her.

The reef is quite within appreciable distance now. The hands can do nothing more, so they gaze at the dancing line of phosphorescent atoms, and curse tremendously—though these may be their last moments.

"All hands wear ship!" comes sharply from Anderson.

"—— you and your orders," cries someone. "To the boats, to the boats!"

Although the *Chrysolite* carried five boats, no less than four of them were unseaworthy. In those days the examination of an outward-bound ship was slurred over, with the natural consequence that the marine law was more frequently broken than observed. The only boat on board the *Chrysolite* worth launching was the lifeboat, which stood bottom upwards between the main and mizen masts. At the cry "To the boats!" there was a rush for her. But Anderson is first. He carries in his hand a small axe, meant for clearing away light wreckage. With a vigorous blow the lifeboat is stove in. The men stop short, daunted. He turns about and faces them, looking like an angry Titan.

"Now then, you hell-hounds, wear the ship or sink!" They see he means to be master to the end.

It is too late even for imprecation. The men literally spring to their work, with an alacrity begot of desperation. Every moment is of the utmost value, for the reef is very close and the horrible breakers are in all ears.

Anderson himself holds the wheel. He has put the helm up, and soon the great ship with swelling sails breaks out of the current. He feels the change in an instant; the hands know it too. But the danger is not past. Leaving the wheel to another, he runs quickly forward to lean over the weather rail. As he passes through the crowd on the fo'castle, the poor fellows cheer him ringingly. The fine old seaman doffs his cap and makes them a grand, manly bow.

He glances at the reef and then mutters quietly to himself, "She will never clear it, and God forgive me!" Then, wheeling round, he gives a command.

"Let go both anchors! It is our only chance!"

Many hearts sink at the order, but in as few moments as possible the cables are smoking through the hawse-pipes.

The anchors touch bottom, and hold. All hands clutch the stanchions or shrouds in anticipation of the shock. It comes. The ship, racing on, is brought up with a round turn of such sudden force as to shake every nail in her timbers. Aloft there is crash upon crash, and the lighter spars come showering onto the deck, bring along with them ragged remnants of canvas. One man is struck down. The hawsers hum with strenuous vibration. The timbers at the bluff of the bow crack almost vertically, until the ship's nose is well nigh torn out. The tension is too great and the port cable snaps. The starboard one is tougher. But were it ever so tough it would not save the ship, for its anchor is dragging. Back she sags, gathered into her doom by the whitening waters; until at length, thus lifted along, her keel rests athwart the bank, and she heels over. Her sailing days are done. As the consecutive seas sweep up the reef, she lifts her head and drops it again and again, like a poor recumbent brute in its death hour. But the wind must sometime cease, and the waves forget their anger. Then will she take a long repose, leaning on her shattered side—the very type of a picturesque wreck.

About this time Messrs. Ruin & Ruin were more than usually interested in the shipping news, and one morning they saw, under the heading of Wrecks and Casualties, this:

“MINICOY (MALDIVE ISLANDS).—The ship *Chrysolite*, of London, went ashore yesterday night on the southern reefs, and is now a total wreck. All hands saved except John Anderson, master, who was killed by a falling spar.”

The result of the whole business had far exceeded the owners' expectations. It had been so neatly done; and the greatest comfort of all was that no one was now left who could tell tales. They did not exactly thank God in so many words for the death of their faithful servant. That was very sad, as of course it should be. But they thanked Him in all humility for a certain sum of £3,000, which would have gone elsewhere but for—. If he, Anderson, had had wife or children, Messrs. Ruin & Ruin felt almost certain they would have made provision for them. But they thanked God again that he had never married. All that was necessary to be done now was to send in a claim for the insurance money, and, if well advised, retire into private life.

Messrs. Ruin & Ruin talked the matter over between them, congratulated themselves upon their prosperity, made no end of choice little plans for the future, and finally decided to forsake the commercial profession. And, indeed, they would have done so, but that the evening papers contained an item of intelligence, which, though less expected, and therefore more startling, contained just as lively an interest for them as the report of the wreck. It ran thus:

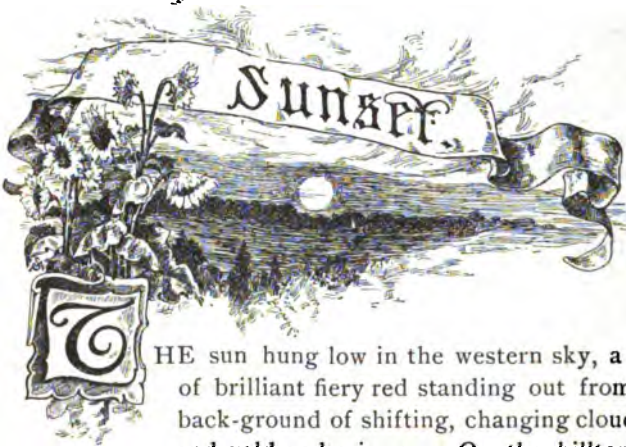
"It is currently reported that the Jupiter Insurance Company has failed heavily, and is only able to meet its liabilities with a composition of sixpence on the £."

Messrs. Ruin & Ruin still carry on business near Billiter Street, but their offices are now on the top floor in a very back alley



ETCHING: SUNSET*

BY VIRA RIAL.



THE sun hung low in the western sky, a great globe of brilliant fiery red standing out from a glowing back-ground of shifting, changing cloud, all purple and gold and crimson. On the hilltops the light of day still ruled, but down below in the valley the shadows were beginning to gather in the darkest corners, although the crimson fire of the sunset was touching all the roofs and western windows with glowing flame. In the beautiful little garden of the rectory the rich crimson light fell softly, gently, with none of the fiery vehemence that kindled the "high and lofty" places.

The good Père Jacques was seated before the door of the low vine-covered cottage, dignified by the name of rectory, his kindly tired eyes lightly closed and his yellow wrinkled hands, from long habit fingering the beads of his rosary. The mellow evening light fell caressingly upon the placid, aged face with its ruddy, wrinkled cheeks and crown of scant snowy hair, making against the dark-green vine back-ground, a picture long to be remembered.



* Written for Short Stories, with illustration by F. Schuyler Mathews—Copyrighted.

From the church near by, where the choir were rehearsing, came the sonorous notes of the organ mingled with the sweet voice of the young priest Père Étienne, leading in the Kyrie of the High Mass to be sung on the morrow. As the rich tenor notes soared higher and higher, Père Jacques opened his eyes, tired eyes though still glowing with the zeal of his holy calling; his gaze wandered lovingly over the beautiful scene spread before him, from the mountain tops still bathed in the golden glow of the departed sun to the valley now almost shrouded in shadow; he murmured faintly, "*Quel beau soir! Oh, Le Seigneur est bon, mais très, très bon!*" then his eyes closed again, and the restless fingers, still at last, lay listlessly upon his knees, shrouded in the coarse brown habit of his order.



Unknown to him, a form entered the garden, a beautiful form robed in a shining white garment with a halo of light encircling the noble brow and brilliant sweeping wings of snowy white; the face—but who can describe an angel's face?—its chief beauty was light—a light that seemed to glorify all on which it fell and that softly enveloped the old priest as the form floated to his side and lightly touched his forehead saying—"Come, faithful servant, thy days have been many, and thy good works manifold. To-day thy master calls thee home."

A great beauty grew upon the face of the slumbering priest—the beauty of eternal peace and rest.

The angel folding his hands upon his breast, floated out of the garden and disappeared—the last faint light of day faded from the hilltops, while from the now lighted church sounded Père Étienne's rich tenor voice—"Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, E-le-i-son."

THE STUFFED CAT*

I was all alone one evening in my study.

Do you not know this study? That is natural because I never have introduced you to it. Perhaps you would not like it; I like it very much, first of all, because it is mine, and then because I have arranged it according to my own tastes.

There is a little of everything in it; a colossal writing-desk with an infinity of drawers and pigeon-holes; a book-case, some shelves for books, two tables—one large and one small—a divan, an arm chair; on the floor, rugs and cushions thrown down anywhere; pictures on the walls, a gas lamp in the centre. In one corner, on top of a column of black wood, is a stuffed cat, a magnificent tiger-striped cat, with sparkling green eyes, that seems ready to spring down from its pillar, tired probably of acting Simeon Stylites.

In this den or study, as you please to call it, I pass beautiful hours, day or evening, writing, reading, meditating, smoking and doing nothing.

It is here that I retire in hours of the blues, in those hours of unconscious, instinctive ill-humor which one cannot explain or justify, and which, exactly on that account, one translates into an extraordinary nervous irritation.

This den is the despair of my wife and the rest of the household, because they are positively forbidden to touch, to even move a book or a paper, under that pretext of putting into order, which resolves itself into real disorder. I will wager that if my wife, my sister-in-law, my nieces, could arrange my den according to their tastes, turning it upside-down, they would be happy. But they do not venture for fear of me. Only when I speak of my study, all those feminine lips curl with smiles, disdainful, ironical or compassionate.

It is especially the stuffed cat that jars upon their nerves. My wife absolutely wished to throw him away, give him away, destroy him. I was obliged to declare to her that such an outrage would immediately provoke, on my part, a

*Translated from the Italian, by Elizabeth Cavazza, for *Short Stories*—copyrighted.

demand for legal separation—pending the approval of divorce by vote of the Italian Chamber of Deputies.

Now that I have presented, so to say, the surroundings, I will go on to relate the fact, the terrible, frightful fact that has taken place in my delicious den, and to which I am indebted for the gray hairs that embellish my thirty-six-year-old locks.

One evening, in the Autumn, all my family was in the country. I only had stayed in town to attend to some urgent work.

I was all alone in the house. A woman came every morning to clean, to sweep and air the rooms, and went away after noon. I dined at a restaurant.

Now, for some days, I thought that I noticed in my study something strange, odd, unaccustomed. It had the same effect upon me as if something were not in its place. I would have taken my oath that certain books had been moved, certain papers had been rummaged.

I questioned the domestic, who swore and perjured herself to the effect that, faithful to her trust, she had touched nothing, but had limited herself to sweeping the floor and dusting the furniture. And no one else ever entered the room.

One morning it seemed to me that the stuffed cat, my good cat with the green eyes, that I called Tic when he was alive, had been touched; certainly his attitude was not the same, or I was dreaming. Yes, yes, his head was turned another way, and the expression of his face, that of an honest feline, was different from that which I was accustomed to have before my eyes. How in the world had such a strange phenomenon happened?

But this was nothing. For two or three evenings, shut up in my study, writing—alone in the large apartment, I thought I heard singular noises here and there. I arose from the desk, went out of the study and all through the house, carefully examining every room, stopping now in this one and now in that, to listen. Nothing. The rooms were deserted; the silence was complete, profound.

Then I returned to my study and set to work again. But the noises persisted and became more decided and frequent. I would have sworn that some mysterious and invisible being was scratching in the walls, or forcing some lock. One even-

ing, indeed, it seemed to me that the noise was just behind me, and I turned mechanically.

Well, I would have taken my oath that I saw the cat Tic move almost imperceptibly and his eyes gleam brighter, and his back arch, and his bold majestic tail stretch itself in an act of defiance.

But surely it was a hallucination, because the cat was still in his place, impassable, and gave no sign of moving from his column.

All these small things, insignificant and extraordinary at the same time, had impressed and disturbed me. By instinct, by nature, I don't fancy what I cannot explain; I am a foe to the supernatural, the marvellous, the mysterious; I like to see clearly within and around myself.

I, you see, am of a well-balanced and sound temperament; nervousness, morbidness and such nonsense, annoy me and are repugnant to me.

And as I think I know myself pretty well, I was surprised and bored by a state of mind so contrary to my habits and nature. Evidently my physio-psychological system was in a moment of crisis.

How could I get out of it, be cured? Must I too, take the first train and go into the country? Perhaps that would be the best way. But unfortunately I could not; I had an important engagement to supply some work, and I could not run away and leave it for whims of a dreamer, fit for a hysterical woman.

"Per bacco!" I told myself, "Pay no attention to the thing! Let us be a man, what, the deuce!"

And I returned home that evening as usual, after having dined and visited the Caff .

I had planned to work hard that evening, in order to make haste to finish.

Having entered the house, I made, as usual, an inspection of the apartment, and found everything as before; not even a chair out of place. Then I went into my study and lighted the gas, to begin work.

But as soon as I seated myself at the desk and cast a glance upon the manuscript where I had left off writing, a marvellous, amazing surprise awaited me.

You must know that I was writing a novel — Oh, what a novel! — Something fine, exceptionally fine! A romance like

that surely no one ever wrote. The real and the fanciful, the romantic, the classic, the naturalistic, were skilfully mingled in it.

Now that day, when I went out, I had interrupted the story at a very interesting point, and the period ended thus:

"He burst into a sonorous laugh of scorn; he was very sure that the time of phantoms and spectres was long past! That apparition then gave him no fear. It must be a trick."

I had left it there.

Taking up the pen in order to continue, with my good cigar lighted in my mouth, I cast my eyes on the paper, and what did I see?

Just heavens? What indeed!

Directly below the last line written by me had been written one word only: *Fool!* There it was, ironical and menacing, in Gothic letters, which showed the handwriting of a former age.

Who had traced this scornful and mocking word? You can imagine whether I remained amazed! I will say even more: I felt an impression of terror. My servant did not know how to read or write; no one had come into the house during the day; then by whom had the words been written?

I grew livid and felt myself shudder.

I sprang to my feet. I felt the hair stand on end upon my head, and a cold perspiration trickle down my forehead!

Tic, the accursed stuffed cat, looked fixedly at me, and his green eyes seemed to dilate and become variegated with a thousand colors. But was that cat really stuffed? Or was he not rather alive by virtue of some witchcraft!

All at once I roused myself; I had a feeling of shame and rage; and furious, striking with a heavy fist on the writing desk, I exclaimed:

"But who is the demon that has written this word? I would like to know him, to twist his neck?"

If I were to live a thousand years, I shall never forget what happened then.

I had hardly finished speaking those words when the study resounded with mocking laughter, dry, strident, infernal.

Then the wall opened suddenly, and there came forth a woman wrapped in a great, black mantle. And Tic, the accursed cat, made a leap from his pillar and, mewing as he had

never mewed in his lifetime, went to rub himself against that mysterious being.

I drew back, more dead than alive. Still, I had enough presence of mind to stretch a hand behind me, open a drawer of the desk and take out a loaded revolver. As soon as I had seized the weapon I felt safer.

I raised my arm and pointed the revolver at that being, with the exclamation:

"Now, we will see who you are!"

Alas! Once, twice, thrice, I touched the trigger; but the revolver was no longer obedient.

The mysterious figure made two steps toward me; the black mantle that enfolded her, fell to the floor.

What a fearful sight! It was not a man nor a woman. It was a skeleton, a skeleton with two lights flaming in its empty, cavernous eye-sockets. A skeleton that laughed satanically, while the cat Tic made fantastic and wild leaps.

It was—it was death!

In the morning they found me insensible in my den. The servant ran to call a physician, who found me in a high fever. My family hastened from the country; I was taken care of, treated and cured. But the fact remains, my hair had turned gray.

When I was able to return to my den, the cat Tic was no longer there; my wife had made a *coup d'état* and sent it to be thrown into the river. The column had also disappeared; it had been given away, I do not know to whom.

My manuscript was, however, still in its place. Only the word: *Fool!* was no longer there.

Then it had not been written?

Still, I was very sure of having read it.

Who knows? If the cat Tic had still been there, perhaps he could have told me. But poor Tic was there no more.

Then, what am I to think?

What shall I believe?

THE TWO SHEIKS*

BY C. L. BREIDENSTEIN.

During the reign of the Caliph Achmed II. there lived, about two days' journey from the city of Bagdad, a venerable Sheik, whose reputation as a devout Mussulman extended throughout the entire kingdom.

His habitation was the mausoleum of a Hadji, whose origin was enveloped in mystery, and whose name had been lost to posterity; his memory, however, as a faithful follower of the Prophet was venerated by all true believers, and the odor of his sanctity was an everlasting monument to his many virtues. Many were the miraculous cures said to have been effected at his tomb, and worshippers from far and near were wont to make pilgrimages thereto in order to perform their devotions. Great numbers of them found relief from bodily ills, and many were the gifts the good Sheik received in testimony of their gratitude; the choicest of their flocks and fields, silks and other precious stuffs, and many purses of gold were laid at his feet.

He devoted his entire time to prayer and meditation on the mutability of human affairs and his renown increased day by day.

The young dervish whom he had taken as a pupil, and whose duty it was to feed the lamp kept burning continually before the sacred tomb, praised Allah that it had been granted him to serve so holy a man; and whenever his duties permitted he could be found listening to the words of wisdom and instruction that fell from the Sheik's lips. His term of probation, however, being ended, he took leave of his master with many tears and soon after attained great renown in one of the neighboring cities.

Now it so happened that the new dervish, whom the Sheik took as pupil and servant, was a most indolent and good-for-nothing fellow, whose sole ambition was a full stomach, and who after serving ten years showed no inclination to better his fortune as his predecessor had done.

*An amusing tale of the East. Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

The Sheik, thereupon, one day addressed him thus:

"Allah Kerim, God is great! My son, it is useless for you to remain longer in my service, you have attained all the knowledge it is in my power to bestow on you, go therefore and seek your fortune in the world; I give you this ass to help you on your journey, and may Allah and his Prophet be with you and grant you long life."

The dervish humbly kissed the hand of his patron, and taking the ass by the halter, led him forth, intending to mount him as soon as he had left the precincts of the holy place.

Alas! hardly had he gone a few steps ere he became aware that his companion was woefully lame and decrepit, and that it would be utterly impossible to make use of him. He therefore procured a stout cudgel from a neighboring thicket, and with many blows persuaded him to continue the journey. Thus he drove him the entire day, and until far into the night, when suddenly the beast fell by the roadside and expired.

"Alas!" said the dervish "what shall I now do? If I allow this miserable ass to lie where he has fallen, his carrion will in a short time pollute the air, and I, being a stranger, shall doubtless be thrown into prison and bastinadoed. I will therefore dig a pit, and bury him here."

He then, with much labor, dug a deep hole, threw the body in, and having covered it decently, sat himself down on the mound to rest from his exertion, and commenced bewailing his mournful plight.

While thus lamenting and weeping, he noticed a body of horsemen, magnificently mounted and attired, riding rapidly in his direction, across the plain. Their attention was at once attracted by the dervish and the mound on which he sat, and upon arriving near by they halted.

"Doubtless there were two dervishes," said one of the horsemen, to the leader of the party, "one of them has fallen by the wayside, and his companion has buried him here and is mourning his loss."

This view of the case seemed to them so probable, and showed such devotion on the part of the mourner, that they dismounted, and approached the dervish offering words of consolation and sympathy.

"Allah be with you, and give you long life!" said the leader, who was none other than the Caliph's vizier returning from a hunting expedition. "We see, with much sorrow, that

you have lost your brother. I pray you, however, console yourself and dry your tears, for, Allah be praised, we are true believers, and will build a mausoleum over the remains of your departed brother, who is now, doubtless, in the arms of the Prophet, and you shall keep watch over the sacred relics. Be of good cheer, therefore, and take no heed for the future."

The dervish moaned piteously for a few moments, and then looking up, with tears streaming down his face, replied: "Allah is great, and his goodness is beyond human knowledge; yet it is a terrible affliction, my lord, to lose one who has been my companion for these many years, and who in all that time has never given me a harsh word, nor have I ever heard him speak an untruth. Verily, he was a model of patience."

Only after much persuasion, and cheered by the thought that befitting honors would be paid the deceased, was the dervish's grief assuaged; and the party took their leave with the assurance that their promise would be speedily fulfilled.

In a short time a splendid mausoleum was erected over the mound; the eternal lamp was placed before the tomb, and the devoted dervish was installed as Sheik to keep watch over the remains. The Faithful flocked in great numbers to the tomb of the new saint, and ere long it had become the most renowned mausoleum in the land.

The wisdom, knowledge and piety of the Sheik were extolled above all others and many wonderful cures were performed. The blind were made to see, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk, and in a short time the old Sheik, his former master, found that the rising glory of the new star was speedily eclipsing his own, and that the number of worshippers at his shrine was rapidly diminishing. He therefore resolved to visit the new Sheik, with the hope of acquiring some of the wisdom of which he had heard so much.

The journey was for him a long and weary one, yet he was sustained by faith and at length arrived at the mausoleum. Who can, however, describe his amazement when he entered and recognized, in the occupant, his former servant and pupil, whom he had turned away in despair at his ignorance.

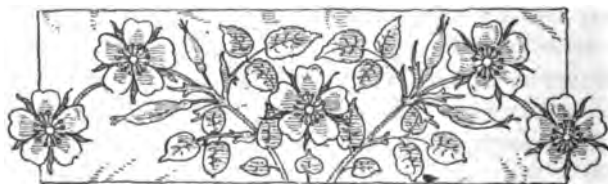
The recognition was mutual, yet neither gave any sign,

and the young Sheik began to hope that age had so impaired his former master's faculties, that he would not remember him. He therefore gave him the "musasir," or sign of salutation, and for several days they performed their devotions jointly at the holy tomb.

One evening, however, as they were sitting alone, the old Sheik bent his head to the other's ear, and whispering, said: "May Allah grant you long life! Tell me, I pray you, by what strange change of fortune were you enabled to attain this greatness?"

And the other made reply; "My father, all that I am, I owe to the miserable, lame and dying ass you presented me with when I left your service; this is his tomb, all merit belongs to him."

For a long time the old Sheik sat in silent meditation, stroking his venerable beard. At length, raising his eyes from the ground, he said: "Allah is great, and Mohammed is his Prophet! What you have told me is passing strange, for learn, my son, that under the mausoleum, where I found so much honor and profit, lie buried the bones of the sire of thy ass."



FROM HILARY'S JOURNAL*

BY GEORGE H. PICARD.

It was a cruel day for us when our Novitiate house was burned. It was a sorrow, too, that followed in the wake of much joyfulness, for it was the eve of Founder's Day, and we had been merry in the refectory and common hall. Brother Pacquelet had been generous, even prodigal, of his store of nuts and apples, and we were taxing his doughty stewardship to the utmost limit. For once, the rule had been greatly relaxed. We kept it up, too, in a really worldly fashion until the bell proclaimed the vigil—for it was also the eve of a great immovable feast, and its vigil must be observed. Then we were eremites again.

Our office said, we went to our cells and slept until the dreadful moment, when, barefooted friars, indeed, we stood homeless in the light snow which had already fallen in our mountain region of Maryland. It is not likely that any one of us will forget the vigil of our Founder's Day.

No lives were asked of us. Even Brother Pacquelet, whose sleep is marvelous, and his squirrel, our nimble harlequin, who had taken refuge in the ample pocket of his master's habit, were borne into safety. But, alas, the spot had been very dear to all of us!

Happily, our foundation had other roofs to shelter us. Our house must be rebuilt, and, in the meantime, we are to become the guests of a distant community which has done a marvelous work for our Order. We are very proud of Carmel, and I should think that our blessed Founder's Heaven must be the greater if he is permitted to look down upon it. It is the jewel among our worldly possessions, and our brethren's patient toil has redeemed it from the desert. It is set deep in the heart of a great midland valley, and it seems to us that no earthly demesne can be fairer or more royal. When one looks upon its fields and orchards and gardens some idea of the lost heritage of Adam—surely that Garden—but one is not permitted to deal so unspiritually with such matters.

*A novice's story. Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

We are safely housed here at Carmel. We are almost happy again, even Brother Pacquelet's squirrel, who has lost not a whit of his old-time tirelessness. The Novitiate is re-established, we are living again according to the Rule, and peace and decorum prevail. It is at the midday recreation and I am writing in the small book, which was given to me by Father Martin on the day when we turned our grief-stricken faces from the ruins of our fallen sanctuary. It was a farewell gift, too, for Father Martin, who had been our master, had been called by our Provincial to another field. It was a peculiar gift, even for a religious who has so little to give. I was surprised at the Father's parting words, for he is the most serious of our brethren and has small taste for levity.

"I am called to one end of the earth and you are going to the other," he said; "but that does not mean that I shall never again set eyes on you. Take this little book and put yourself into it, so that I shall lose nothing of you during our separation. Write everything, Hilary."

I was puzzled but I knew that he was not making merry with me. I sighed, for I realized how unspiritual I was and how lacking in contemplation. I felt no inclination to undertake a talk of such faint promise.

"Ah, Father," I expostulated, "I shall not be able to prove myself to be another Francis d'Assisi!"

"Assuredly not, my son," he answered, with a grim smile; "that is far more than we expect of you. Nevertheless, write everything."

"What is everything?" I cried after him, for he had turned away and was about to leave me.

He came back and took my hand and held it for a moment. "Your daily life, the small affairs of the Novitiate—they are *your* everything. There will be a new Master of Novices—write much of him."

I do not know why Father Martin has shown a preference for me in this matter. He knows me to my very soul. He knows that I am not drawn into my vocation by the sweet, contemplative mysticism which has given to our Order its canonized saints. I do not hate the world, and it is not easy for me to meditate. Nevertheless, I believe in the genuineness of my vocation. I love the life although I must live all my days on the very confines of its true significance. And I

know, also, that Father Martin has a certain faith in me. He once said to me:

"You have many of the essentials of the true eremite. Ecstasy, in this sordid age, is of little use to us. You have your qualities, Hilary. If Savonarola had been possessed of a tithe of your obedience, it would have made a man of him!"

My mother is skeptical. She believes it to be a youthful vagary, and she is persuaded that I shall be quite cured of my ambition before the end of my novitiate. She does not even think it necessary to dissuade me. She will not look at it seriously. She will only declare that it is preposterous. But from the first I have had no doubt; something assures me that I shall persevere.

It will not be a matter of severe discipline for me to record the small affairs of the community in the little book. I delight in them, and I am sure that Father Martin knew that his command would prove to be no burden. I am quite as likely to regret that its pages are so few. To tell something of the loveliness of this spot alone would fill it; and not one of our brethren is undeserving of careful treatment—not even Brother Pacquelet, whose supreme temptation it is surreptitiously to take snuff during Compline. And I have discovered that it will not be a dreary task to write much of our new Master, Father Augustin. I have been here at Carmel less than a fortnight, but he is the most interesting person I have ever seen.

Although Father Augustin's daily walk is that of the most exemplary religious, it is clear that his administrative genius is dominant. It is under his rule that this community has reached its present development, and, now, to the office of Superior he has added the spiritual direction of our Novitiate. I have been told that he professed in our order when he was already a man of mature age, and that he speedily became great among us. It is not difficult to believe that he was a power in that outer world which he forsook. His rule is inflexible, but it is administered with an austere graciousness that is irresistible. I shall be tempted to make a hero of him. I shall stand far off and look on him wistfully, in despair of a closer fellowship. But, are we not taught that a great earthly friendship is a thing to be avoided, and that our desire for human fellowship must be content to know no

preferences? Still, I feel certain that Father Augustin's eye is on me; that, I suppose, is evidence of good generalship. He has even sought me out during the brief moments of respite from our prescribed labor, and we have spoken of the matters that concern my future. With great unreserve I have talked to him about my approaching profession. I spoke enthusiastically, for at the coming Eastertide the term of my novitiate will have been served. I am grieved to discover that the Father does not share my enthusiasm; he has thus far given me neither encouragement nor advice. Perhaps that, too, is further proof of his skillful leadership.

This morning we went more deeply into the matter. It was in the Sacristy after Father Augustin's mass, at which I am appointed to serve. After he had divested himself, he came and stood beside me and watched me as with due precision I reverently folded and put away the sacred vestments.

"You are an excellent sacristan, Hilary," he said presently. "You show nothing perfunctory about your service."

I blushed with pleasure at the Father's words. His spoken appreciation of even my humblest duty was almost more than I could have asked.

"To serve has been one of the greatest joys of my novitiate; and to serve you is greatest of all," I was so bold as to say.

He smiled gravely at my impetuosity. I was aghast at my temerity, but my courage revived when I saw that he was not displeased.

"If I did not know you, Hilary, I might suspect you of what one of our theologians has called 'unconscious guile,'" he said. "But I must not permit myself to take too great pleasure from your words."

I finished my work and then the great bell began to toll for Lauds. I was going, but the superior laid his hand on my arm and detained me.

"Do not go, Hilary," he said. "For this once I will relax the rule and you shall stay here and talk to me. I want to question you."

Obedient to his gesture, I sat upon an oaken chest. He did not sit but began to walk up and down the stone floor with steps that were almost noiseless.

Presently he stopped short and looked at me so sternly that my heart sank.

"What brought you to us, Hilary?" he demanded.

I hesitated, for it was a question whose answer was at the end of my halting tongue. It seemed at that moment so unsatisfying, and, withal, so presumptuous, to ascribe it to that over-mastering desire which constitutes the true vocation. But, finally, I did say it in words that were sadly wanting in directness.

He smiled again, incredulous, it seemed to me, and resumed his pacing.

"Why do you wish to forsake the world—have you any quarrel with it—has it hurt you?" he asked, almost fiercely.

I was obliged to answer him that I felt no malice for the world, for, indeed, I cannot justly accuse it of a single act of cruelty toward me.

"Is it, then, distasteful to you? Or, do you lack appreciation? Has it not seemed beautiful to you?"

At this I must have been confused and barren of words had I not observed that the Father seemed to fall into abstraction. His keen eyes did not demand an instant answer; they were downcast, and I am sure that he sighed.

"I do not know, Hilary; I cannot imagine what your world has been that you are so ready to forswear it," he said.

I was again distressed, for I feared that he would discover little merit in a desire which showed so faint a touch of sacrifice. I realized that that to plead indifference would be puerile. How could I defend myself?

He must have divined my thoughts, for his face lost much of its seriousness and he smiled.

"You need no refuge, Hilary; your world has not deceived you, and if you have not loved it inordinately, you are not required to give it up. Are you sure that you are consistent, my child?" he asked, almost banteringly.

I realized that the time had come when I must interpose some kind of a defense. I summoned as best I could my lagging courage and began to speak of my boyhood. The Father sat beside me and listened with forbearance and much courteous interest. I had, in truth, a commonplace account to give; my life had been so free from everything that gives piquancy to a tale. I have slept in a bed of roses, and my mother had seen to it that I have suffered no rude awakening. The very surfeit of tenderness that I have known must have prompted me to set my heart on the

blessed loneliness of the religious life. My mother has no other child and I have been the sole distraction of her long widowhood. I have been bred in the faith, but my mother did not teach me to look with favor on the estate of holy poverty. That came of its own accord—Heaven-sent I fondly believe. My brave, proud mother! I talked long and lovingly of her. She will yield—she is so fond of me that she will yield even to this my heart's desire. And this was all there was to tell, except that I can bring to the Order a generous dower; my father, whom I have not known, made that possible.

"Ah, yes, your father; I have not heard you speak of him," said the Superior, breaking his silence.

I answered him that for my father's memory I had always cherished a profound and awed respect, as for a spirit so dim and far away that the saints seemed vastly nearer and more like flesh and blood. Of late, however, I loved him because he had made it possible for me to do an act that most of all things I desire to do.

The Father looked at me inquiringly and I confessed not without trepidation, that it was the burning wish of my soul to raise again our fallen ruin among the hills of Maryland.

Father Augustin put one of his thin hands upon my head. "My dear enthusiast, console yourself, he said; "the Novitiate house will be rebuilt. We are beggars only in theory; our coffers are actually bursting. We do not hunger for your mite."

I was not crushed; my thirst was too importunate for that, and, besides, the Superior spoke with gentleness. I even felt that I might now undertake to urge my case with greater vigor. But I was not given the opportunity, for the Father continued:

"Have you considered well the possible consequences of such a step? Are you ready to break your mother's heart? Can you do it, Hilary?"

My breath almost left me. "Oh, Father," I said, affrightedly, "my mother is full of courage. You do not know how strong she is—you do not know!"

He rose quickly and drew his cloak tightly about his tall body—our Sacristy is unwarmed and the air was very chill.

"You should know best of all," he said. "I have only

repeated her own words. She has written to us that it will break her heart."

I hung my head and buried my burning face in my hands. I had to struggle against the tide of mingled longing and vexation that threatened to unman me. I could not trust myself to speak at once, but finally, from behind my hand I managed to gasp out: "Are you, then, going to send me home to my mother like a schoolboy in disgrace?"

Father Augustin had already reached the door and was lifting the latch. At my words he turned half-way and looked at me. Never as long as I live shall I forget the look in his face.

"No," he said, so huskily that he was forced to clear his throat; "I have directed Brother Clement to assure her that we cannot set ourselves against a true vocation. It would be contrary to our notion of right, and it would be at conflict with the policy of our order."

Then he opened the door and passed out.

Last night I was so full of thoughts concerning my own affairs that I could not at once compose myself to sleep. I had already recited the longer Rosary, as we are recommended to do; and was between sleeping and waking, when a sudden light filled the blessed nakedness of my cell. Through my sleep-burdened eyelids I seemed to see standing in my door a tall, spare figure, clad in a habit of rusty black, bearing in one hand a lighted taper. I was not startled, for it is Father Augustin's privilege as the Master of the Novices to be our vigilant sentinel. I did not speak, for it would have been contrary to our rule of perfect silence.

It seemed to me that he came and stood beside my bed; that he looked down upon me for several moments (I can almost aver that my eyes were sensitive to the taper's light, and that I heard him breathe), and that he stooped and kissed my forehead. Then it was dark again.

I have never had a dream more real.

My mother is here at Carmel. She is the guest of the community, and, although according to our rule, she may not be housed beneath our conventual roof, she has been made comfortable in the visitor's pavilion, which stands within our garden. My dear, brave mother! She has aged

since last we were together. Her hair is white and her face is very sweet. She is the only link that binds me to the exterior life; but for her I am as free as if I already slept with the brethren in our churchyard.

My days are full of joy, my very grief is ecstasy. The long Lenten season is drawing to a close and the hour of my profession is very near. The great glory of Easter is upon us. Spring, too, is here and it lifts me up. Am I at fault, I wonder, to feel so rapturously the peace that has fallen upon me?

My mother has found me immovable in my determination to enter this life of lives. She has decided that she will not be present at the ceremony of my reception and institution. I know that when I say good-bye to her and she turns her dear face away from Carmel I shall see her no more on earth. Not even when her still body is put away from earth's garish light shall I see her. But ah, I do not forget that forever which quickly begins and has no ending.

One thing, however, I could have wished to be otherwise: I had counted so much on Father Augustin and he has failed me. It seemed to me that he of all others could have transformed my mother's rebellious grief into the spirit of blissful sacrifice. But she will not see him at all. On the day before her arrival he was called away to one of our distant missions and he will not return until she has gone away from Carmel. I know now that my disappointment is salutary, for I was inspired by the pride that the Superior should see my mother. I wished him to understand that I was capable of making a sacrifice.

It has passed. My mother has said good-bye and has gone away from Carmel. There has been a tug at my heart-strings, but I did not yield. I wish that Father Augustin would return. I need him sorely; the thought of him is what gives me most solace in this very hour of deep disquietude.

My mother's words to me are a legacy that I shall never forget. "My Darling," she said as I stood beside her at that outer gate through which I might not pass, "in the happy days when we were together the only thing that marred our content was the common fear that there would come a time when one of us would be left desolate. How often have I heard you wish that we might die together? I know that my

own heart never failed to re-echo your outspoken longing. We are to have our wishes gratified; my son, we have died together." She smiled as she said this, but it was the calm which succeeds the tempest. It was the fitting climax of a spent grief. She had come to Carmel armed with many resources. She found me proof against all ordinary attacks. Finally having exhausted her store, she employed her last possible reserve. It was the story of my father's wrongdoing, of which I had lived my life in absolute ignorance. She told it to me, in the guests' room of the pavilion, last night.

I cannot write it, nor has the knowledge of my father's infamy shaken my resolve. It happened before I was born, and for aught my mother knows the offender still walks the earth. My proud, disenchanted young mother! In her wild agony she bade him hide his dishonored face forever. He had the grace to obey her, and he has kept silent. What will Father Augustin say to this? Have I not a just cause to forsake the world! Who else may expiate my father's sin?

I was stupefied. The soft spring air was stifling and the heavy fragrance that was borne in from our lilac thicket grew hateful beyond endurance. But the most pitiable was yet to come. Having finished her bitter revelation my mother fell upon her knees and clasped my feet. "Oh, John, John" she cried (I am Hilary only in religion), "do I deserve this crowning agony? Have pity, my son, for I have never known grief like this!"

I raised her tenderly. My eyes were blinded with scalding tears, but there was no word that I could speak. My heart was sick with pity, but my will bound me. My longing for the religious life was even intensified. How truly did I despise the world. At that moment I would have died rather than re-enter it. Yield—I could not; the true vocation that burned within me would not suffer me. Weak and miserable I was, but I was firm. I could only repeat helplessly, as a child in overwhelming grief, "I wish Father Augustin was here! Oh, I wish he was here!"

At these puerile words my mother turned on me with a cry like that of an infuriated animal. "I, too, wish that he were here!" she said, fiercely. "I wish that I might stand face to face with the man who has robbed me of my son!"

Father Augustin returned to Carmel this morning. He

had no sooner arrived than Brother Pacquelet came to bid me go to him in the little office where he administers the temporal affairs of the community. Although I had chafed at his inopportune absence and yearned ardently for his return I suffered a feeling of intense disquietude at the summons. An annoying spiritual apathy, which had beset me since my mother's departure, deepened and left me lukewarm and uncertain. For once, I despised myself and felt no exaltation from it.

The superior was sitting at his desk, but he was not engaged in his accounts. As I entered he rose and came forward to greet me. It seemed to me that he was changed—that he was not the same. He was very pale and looked weary and ill. The hand that he gave me was cold and tremulous. I was so impressed that my first words betrayed my anxiety.

"Are you ill, Father?" I asked.

He pressed my hand and smiled at my eagerness. "I think not," he replied, leading me to a chair set close beside him at the desk. "I do not know how it is to be ill; I have not had any sickness. Shall I, do you think, be able to recognize it when it comes?"

His pleasantry did not reassure me. I could but see with what profound weariness his words were spoken and all his movements made. I knew that his labors were most arduous, his vigils most constant, and his discipline pitiless; but even I, who am not a close observer, saw more in his appearance than abstinence could explain.

"Your mother has been with you," he continued, resuming his seat.

"Yes," I answered with reproach in my tone, all the bitterness of my recent trial coming back to me; "my mother has been here. I wish you could have seen her."

"My poor child, you have suffered; I can see it," he said, with a tenderness that quite unmanned me.

"Yes," I admitted, struggling with my childishness. "I have been so sadly disappointed—not for myself—I can endure it—but I know that you, of all men, could have comforted my mother."

He smiled and shook his head. "I am a coward, Hilary. I knew that I could not stand face to face with your mother; so I fled," he said.

"Do you mean that you left me without your counsel—that you went away from Carmel because my mother was coming?"

"Yes, my child," he answered, simply.

I was astounded, but I was not long in finding a plausible reason for his conduct. Ah, yes! Beneath this cold exterior there must lie a heart so tenderly attuned to pity that it must hide itself from the spectacle of another's grief. At that moment I could have knelt at his feet. A wild exultation possessed me and all my pain fled. To cover my emotion, which threatened to disclose itself with an extravagance unbecoming a novice, I began at once and related the story of my father.

The Superior permitted me to go to the end. I told everything and found no dearth of words to give it expression. I even felt a savage delight in the self-abasement which I fancied I was suffering. It was such a new experience for me—the opportunity to show him that I, too, had an expiation to make. At that moment I felt grateful to my erring father that he had left me such a spiritual advantage. When I had finished I saw that Father Augustin's cheeks were flushed and that his fingers played nervously with the ends of the cord which girded his habit. He rose immediately and went over to the window which overlooks our garden, where he stood with his back to me. I was trembling in every limb with excitement and the fear that I had over-stepped prudence.

"Has she forgiven him—your father—his offense? Do you know that, Hilary?" he asked, without turning his head.

"I am sure that she has not forgiven him," I answered.

I heard him sigh deeply and I knew that it grieved him to be told that the fire of my mother's resentment had not after these long years been extinguished. Then he turned and came and stood beside me. He put his hands upon my head in a fashion which was half caress, half benediction. There was a holy light in his eyes and his voice was inexpressibly persuasive.

"You must go back to her, my child. She has been cruelly scourged, and now, her sorrow must be turned into joy. Who am I that I should bid her wait for her Heaven?" he said.

My whole soul rose in violent revolt. I tried to speak, but he laid his hand upon my lips.

"I have been at fault—my weakness has undone me. My heart has made a coward of me. My conscience has not taught me to encourage you in your fancy. But I am so fond of you, Hilary, that I would have kept you forever. I have been sorely tempted—I fled from Carmel that I might stand firm in my selfishness."

Again I attempted to speak, but even now he would not listen.

"No," he continued, with a calmness that tortured me; "you shall not remain here. Go back to the world and your mother. I have telegraphed to her the hour of your return."

Now that I might, I could not speak. I put my head upon the desk before me and burst into a passion of tears. The whole structure that I had reared was a ruin, and I stood alone among its débris.

Father Augustin did not attempt to calm my violence. He resumed his sitting and waited until I was able to regain some control of myself.

Finally, as if it were the spoken conclusion of a meditation, he said: "One thing I know, for whatever evil I have done in all my days this act of renunciation is a full and sufficient reparation."

"But you forget—my happiness!" I sobbed, jealously. "You are unjust to me. You have admitted that you cannot resist a true vocation, you wrote it to my mother. Have you the right?"

I lifted my tear-stained face and looked at him defiantly. I saw him as through a mist, his fragile, black-clothed figure indistinctly swaying to and fro in my tear-distorted vision.

"I have the right," he said. "I am the Master of the Novices."

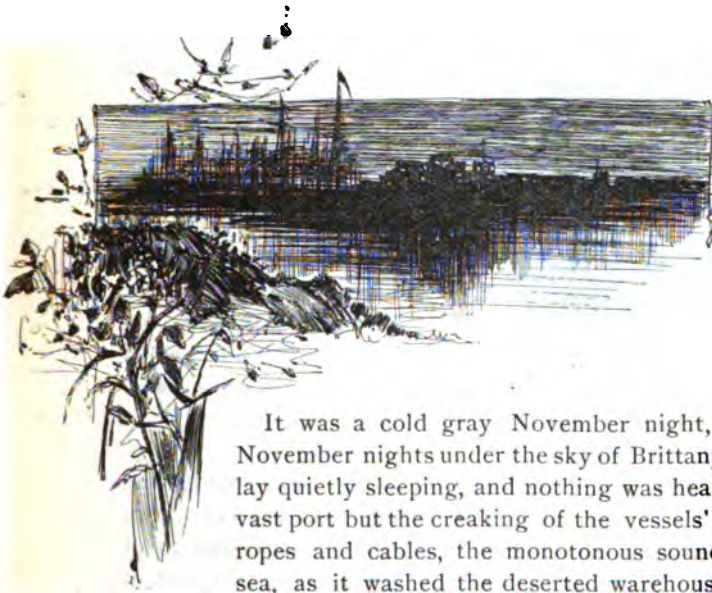
"That is not sufficient," I insisted. "You have already recognized the validity of my vocation."

He smiled at this my illogical defiance. "I have a clearer right," he said. "I may command you. I am your father!"

Before I leave Carmel forever, I will return this little book to Father Martin. No, I will not do that, I will send it before me to my mother. It shall be my mute apologist.

THE NAVAL SURGEON*

By ÉMILE SOUVESTRE.



It was a cold gray November night, like all November nights under the sky of Brittany. Brest lay quietly sleeping, and nothing was heard in the vast port but the creaking of the vessels' mooring ropes and cables, the monotonous sound of the sea, as it washed the deserted warehouses along the coasts, and the cadenced footfall of the ever-vigilant sentinels.

In the distance on the farther shore, the prison loomed up with its time-keeping lights in the midst of the dark masses surrounding it. From one of the rooms, the light gleamed less brightly, and seemed to melt away into the night—it was the convict's infirmary. At the window of this sick-room, a young man, wearing the uniform of a surgeon in the navy, was standing, leaning his head against the heavy bars of the window and plunged in the most profound meditation.

Edward Launay was one of those men who will not *accept* a place in the world, but want to *choose* it, and who spend in envying the fortune of others, the time which they might spend in obtaining a fortune for themselves.

Born as he was of the middle class, he might have resigned himself to being poor, or have engaged in something which would bring him wealth, but he could not bring himself to do

*Adapted from the French, by Miss Favard, for Short Stories and illustrated by L. de Bernebruck.—Copyrighted.

either, and preferred to grow angry at the distinctions of society, which he would have delighted in for himself.

He was thinking of all these things when he was drawn

from his abstraction by one of the nurses, who came to tell him that No. 7 had just died. The young surgeon left the window regretfully. He went down the long aisle, between the two rows of beds toward the number designated, for in a hospital the sick person has no name; the only thing known there is the bed; the invalid is but an accessory, a passenger who comes and goes.

Arriving at No. 7, Launay drew aside the sheet which had been

thrown over the face of the dead man, and looked at it attentively. All his thoughts had given place to a sort of scientific interest; the instinct of the physician had awakened in him at sight of the corpse.

He passed his hand lightly over the head and studied the muscles of the face; then, as if he had suddenly resolved to verify certain observations, he ordered the body to be taken to the dissecting room.

The dead man offered indeed an excellent subject of study for the disciple of Gall or Lavater. Found guilty of theft and assault with intent to kill, and sentenced to the penitentiary for life, Pierre Cranou had been twenty years in jail, occupied with but one idea—flight. Sixty different times had he attempted to escape, sometimes even succeeding, but sixty different times had he been caught and brought back. Repeated lashings, in punishment for these offences, had made him infirm and decrepit, but never once had he given up his project. It seemed as though the desire for liberty grew with the impossibility of satisfying it.

It became an incurable monomania. Finally he was chained to his stone bench in the prison dungeon. This last



measure deprived him of all hope. He seemed to give up his idea of flight, but was soon taken seriously ill. He had been about a week in the infirmary, when the events related in our narrative occurred.

Servants entered with a litter and the body was taken to the dissecting room. Familiar as Launay was with the Amphitheatre, the unaccustomed hour, the cold and penetrating dampness of the room, and the fantastic shadows which night throws over all caused him an involuntary shudder. He hurriedly prepared his instruments, approached the table and uncovered the body.

Launay looked long at the man who had endeavored so long to break the chain which, dead though he was, still bound him; then he brought the lamp closer, and took his dissecting knife from its case.

When he seized the arm of the dead man he thought he felt a slight resistance. Surprised, almost frightened, he bent over the body, and raised the head to the light, the eyelids trembled slightly; he drew it nearer, and the dead man opened his eyes.

Launay, horror-stricken, let the body fall; then the dead man rose slowly to a sitting posture, and looked anxiously about him. The young surgeon remained motionless, not knowing what to think, when he saw Pierre Cranou glide softly from the table toward the window. That movement gave him the clue. Convicts had often before feigned death as a means of escape; he saw that he was duped and, recovering from his horror, he ran after Cranou whom he seized by the waist just as he was about to jump out of the window.

The convict tried to free himself from Launay's grasp but the latter held him firmly, and a fearful struggle began. It was ended only by Cranou's fall, when he, weak and enfeebled, could resist no more.

"Oh! let me go, Mr. Launay," he cried in a supplicating voice. "What does my escape matter to you? You aren't obliged to take charge of the prisoners."

"I have charge of you during your illness, and what would they say of a physician who lets the dead escape?"

"They will never know, and besides, they can't do anything to you. Oh, I beg of you, Mr. Launay. I beg of you, let me go, let me go. Let me just get outside of the door. Just be *free* a minute; let me breathe once more the air of

the outside world. You know they never let me go out. Oh! Mr. Launay, let me go, I beg of you."

"I cannot, it is impossible."

The convict made another effort to free himself, but the surgeon held him like a vise.

"You shall not move without my permission," said he.

"Oh, I must be free, I tell you, I *must* be free," cried Cranou. "Oh, God! Think of it, suffering so long, and all for nothing. I went without food for four days, so as to be ill and be sent to the infirmary. And I succeeded so well! You all thought I was dead. You know you did. And all for nothing, *for nothing*. Oh! Oh! Oh!" and he beat his head against the wall, foaming with rage and anger. Launay was moved by his despair.

"Why do you want your freedom so badly?"

"Why? Oh, you have never been a prisoner! Why do I want to be free? Because I can't stay here. I want my home. Oh, the sun of Marseilles! and the olive trees! Think of it, I haven't seen an olive tree for twenty years!"

"Yes, but what would you do? You could not begin your old trade again. You would starve if you were free."

Cranou smiled—a smile of vain and disdainful contempt—"I? starve? I am richer than the whole lot of you."

"You? Rich!"

"Yes, me."

"Well, you're a lucky one."

Though the words were said with bitter irony, the tone of the surgeon had in it doubtless something which the convict understood.

"Listen," said he, in a lower tone, "do you want to be rich too? I have enough for two."

"What do you take me for?"

"I tell you I am rich enough to make your fortune."

"Oh! There is some stealing you want me to help you with, is there?"

"No. Some money to receive. Help me to escape and I'll divide with you."

"Keep your stories for some one else," said Launay, ashamed of listening, in spite of himself, to a convict's lies, "come to your cell, and let us have an end to this."

The physician rose as he spoke, but still kept his hold on Cranou. "You refuse to believe," cried he with despair.

"But I told you the truth, Mr. Launay; I told you the truth. I swear it."

"Show me your treasure."

"I haven't it here. You know I couldn't have it here. But if you'll only let me go, I swear to God you'll have your share."

"When you've finished talking, Cranou, you'll come with me and have your chains put on again."

Cranou groaned. He seemed to be the prey of some fearful anxiety and doubt. Then rising suddenly—

"Listen," said he, in a tone of such perfect sincerity and truth that the physician was struck by it; "will you promise to let me escape if I prove I'm telling the truth?"

"Let's see what you have to say for yourself."

"Will you promise?"

"Oh, I don't think I should risk much."

"Then, swear."

"Very well, I'll swear."

"Well, on the coast at St. Michael's, north of the boulder of *Irglas*, in a hole six feet under ground, I hid, ten years ago, an iron box containing 400,000 francs."

"And where did you get this iron box?"

"Never mind. I got it. Four hundred thousand francs! Well, if you like, half of that money is yours."

Launay shook his head. "There's a little mistake somewhere. Ten years ago you were in jail."

"Ten years ago I ran away with Martin. We were together and hid the box for fear we'd be pursued. The next day we were arrested at Plestire. Martin died in prison, and I am the only one living who knows where that box is."

In spite of the efforts of Launay to affect indifference, it was evident that he was listening to the convict with eager attention. When the latter had finished speaking, he remained thoughtful for a little while, as if debating within himself the likelihood of what had just been told him, but rousing himself from his thought, he blushed as he met



Cranou's gaze fixed on him, and said in a tone which he tried to make light and incredulous:

"Your story is very nicely planned, but it is an old one. Nobody believes in hidden treasures now, not even at the *Opéra Comique*. Find some other little fable."

The convict shuddered.

"Don't you believe me?" he cried.

"I think you're a skillful rascal, and like to exercise the powers of your imagination on the weak-minded."

"Mr. Launay. Oh! Mr. Launay, do believe me. The iron box is buried in a hole near the *Irglas*. I am sure of finding it when I look."

"I'll excuse you."

"Mr. Launay, I'll give you two-thirds of it, two-thirds."

"There, there, that will do."

"And all the jewels, for there are jewels too."

"That will do, I tell you. Not another word; get up."

Cranou screamed with rage and fell to the floor. "I will never move until I am carried away. I will not walk a step. Oh! to think he won't believe it. Mr. Launay, I assure you it is true. But he won't believe it! Oh, to think of that casket not ten leagues from here, and I can't get at it! Ten leagues between me and it, between this prison and my freedom and wealth. Oh, Mr. Launay, Mr. Launay, believe me, believe me!"

He rolled on the ground in his agonizing despair, crazed with his powerlessness.

As for Launay, he was in the greatest perplexity. What Cranou had told him had brought to the surface all the evil thoughts which were slumbering within him. At one time, he seemed ready to believe in the words of the convict and prepared to accept his proposition, but the fear of being duped, and the shame of such a connivance restrained him. This latter reason was the stronger, and, to get rid of the temptation, he drew near Cranou, and taking him by the arm, tried to force him to go to the Infirmary. Seeing that his efforts were useless, he decided to go for help. He double-locked the door, and ran rapidly to the waiting room, where he told two of the guards to follow him.

As they drew near the door of the Amphitheatre, the report of a firearm was heard, and at the same time, the bleeding body of a man fell at the end of the Court-yard.

It was Cranou who, remaining alone, had succeeded in jumping from the window and upon whom the sentinel had fired.

Launay arrived in time to receive him in his arms, but the ball had pierced his heart—he was dead.

Badenvillers is a little village, situated in a sheltered mountain-valley at the foot of the Black Forest, and whose site seems to have been chosen for that poet, who would attempt to describe an earthly paradise. Surrounded by mountains and forests, the valley lies below the town, and spangled with flowers which the thermal springs water, looks like softest velvet unrolled to the rays of the sun.

Nothing is lacking to this favored spot, nestling amid deep and rugged ravines. It is filled with freshness and sweetness; all of the beauty of nature is there, as the scent of all roses is in the perfumed sachet of a Sultana.

This charming spot, this delightfully and picturesquely environed little village, Badenvillers is (as its name would indicate) a bathing place or summer-resort. The Romans at one time had baths there, of which curious ruins are still shown to travelers. It is the resort of all those quiet people, whom the gay dissipation of Baden alarms, and who fly to the more quiet Badenvillers for rest and recreation. Here are a few Swiss, sitting silently in the sunshine, smoking, while their wives knit; here are quiet Alsations, easily to be recognized from the manner in which they speak German with the French, and French with the Germans; here, too, is the ubiquitous English traveller, and that general agglomeration of other tourists always to be found in such places.

Ever since a sudden accession of wealth—supposed to be a legacy from some distant relative—had allowed Edward Launay to withdraw from the navy, he had journeyed through Italy, Switzerland and Germany. While in this last named country, chance led him to Badenvillers, where, a few days after his arrival, the *diligence* brought to the quiet little hotel, "*Carlsruhe*," with its long avenues of blooming acacias, two English travellers, a Mr. Morpeth and his daughter.

Struck with the singular beauty of the young lady, and with her air of quiet dignity, Launay took advantage of that charming absence of formality, which watering-places are noted for, to make the acquaintance of Mr. Morpeth and his daughter.

He spoke English well enough to enable him to converse with Miss Fanny in her own tongue, and this circumstance, which naturally drew them together, seemed also to isolate

them from the rest of the people at the hotel. Surrounded as she was with Germans, whose language she could not understand, Miss Morpeth was overjoyed to find some one with whom she could communicate in her own language.

She was as amused as a child at Launay's English, and laughed at the French idioms with which he garnished his conversation. She set herself to perfect him in the use of "her language," as she called it, and gave him long and detailed explanations, which Launay was always very careful to forget, in order that his ignorance should require more instruction.

These lessons were generally given in French, which lent them a certain irresistible charm. There is, in fact, in the peculiar accent which a young and beautiful woman gives to a language not her own, in the tone of interrogative doubt and hesitating voice which she lends to the slightest word, an inexplicable fascination and grace. The timid turn of her thought, in the channel of an unaccustomed tongue, the charming little mistakes which fall from her smiling lips, have something childlike about them, as touching as it is *naïf*.

They were always together in all their excursions, and whenever the bathers of Badenvillers saw Mr. Morpeth and his daughter, they were also sure of seeing Mr. Edward Launay.

One day when they had gone up into the mountains to sketch, Edward was lying on the grass, reading aloud, after their luncheon, while Fanny and her father listened near; Fanny turning over one by one the leaves of her lover's



sketch-book. Although she knew its contents by heart, she was looking it over again, and stopped mechanically at a study of boulders in sepia. Her father, who was near her, and following the turning of the leaves as idly as she, started suddenly.

"The *Irglas* boulder!" cried he.

Launay dropped the volume he was reading from, and asked quickly—

"Who told you it was *Irglas*?"

"The name is written under the picture," said Fanny softly.

"Oh! you must be mistaken. It can't be *Irglas*. I never heard of *Irglas* in my life," cried he. Then taking his sketch-book and looking at the drawing, "It's only a ridiculous sketch I made in Switzerland," he exclaimed, tearing out the page angrily, and crumpling it in his hand.

Mr. Morpeth looked at him with astonishment. It seemed as though some long-forgotten thought were awakened within him.

Launay had, ever since the incidents related in the first chapter, shown the greatest repugnance to speaking of his past life, and the least question in regard to it irritated him extremely. Often in the midst of the liveliest conversation, some chance word would arrest his flow of spirit, and it was evident to an attentive observer that there were in his heart chords which could not be touched, even by accident, without exciting the most painful emotion.

Mr. Morpeth abstained from asking him any more questions at the time, but shortly after Edward could see that Fanny seemed less free with him and colder than she had ever been, doubtless through her father's influence.

His love for her filled him with remorse, for he knew that she, too, loved him. Poor child! Did she know to whom her love had been given? Oh, why had he not remained "without reproach?" Was it true then, that in all lives there comes a day, an hour, when all one's sins rise up to confront one; a day, an hour, when one learns that love and duty are both names for the same thing? Then, nothing can give relief,—tears, even, burn, and are of no avail. Tho' one try to fill his heart with joy, it is even empty like the urns of the Danaïdes. Launay felt this deeply, for even his happiness had become a source of suffering and pain.

A few days after, filled with these thoughts, he went down into the valley at break of day. He wandered long in the fragrant woods, seeking to quiet his agitation. At last, when he had succeeded in mastering his emotion, he returned toward the inn, where Fanny was doubtlessly expecting him.

As he went homewards, filled with the tremulous emotion which the beauty with which he was surrounded always awoke in him, and with the hope of soon seeing the woman whom he so dearly loved, his sadness and bitterness gradually vanished. With that facility common to all sensitive natures, he passed from the profoundest dejection to light-heartedness and hope. He began gathering a bouquet of wild flowers for Fanny and with every blossom he plucked, it seemed to him as tho' his dark thoughts took wing and flew away.

He caught sight of Miss Morpeth at the hotel door, as she was seated on her be-ribboned donkey in the queer high wooden saddle used by all excursionists in the Black Forest, and when she, in her turn, caught sight of him, she stepped lightly down from her perch and came toward him, smiling.

She gave him both her hands in welcome, and together they started away in the bright sunshine. The lovers found seats in one of the numerous flower-embowered arbors of the old-fashioned hotel, and there followed one of these conversations, impossible to recount, in which dreams, memories, confidence and endearing words are mingled in sweet and harmonious confusion. Their love seemed intensified by the little coolness which had sprung up between them after the *Irglas* incident, now almost as completely forgotten by her, as if it had never existed.

"Oh, how unkind you were to me those three days," he said.

"Was I? Forgive me. I'll never do it again."

"Are you truly sorry for your conduct?"

"Truly."

"And willing to make amends?"

"Perfectly willing to make amends; but what is your pun-



ishment, my liege lord?" she queried, gayly. "Bread and water for thirty days? Peas in my shoes, and water in the soup?"

"Not quite, dear,—but, Fanny, you have never accepted anything from me. Promise me you will take a brooch I shall send you, and wear it, not thirty days, but always.



Isn't that punishment enough? he added, brightly, as he saw her face growing more and more serious.

"But my father!" she said, hesitatingly.

"Your father will permit you to accept it, I know. I shall send it this evening."

A waiter interrupted them with the announcement that luncheon was served, and they separated for the day.

That evening Fanny received a little velvet case containing a superb brooch set with diamonds, with a note containing these words:

"It is an heirloom in our family. My mother wore it when she was of your age, and it is as though she were offering it to her daughter."

As he had foreseen, these aptly chosen words obliged her to accept his gift; and after dinner, when he went down into the old-fashioned drawing room of the little inn, where every one had gathered for the evening, Miss Morpeth was so surrounded by her friends he could not speak to her immediately, but their eyes met, and he saw that she had fastened her white *fichu* with the brooch. He thanked her with a look full of love and gratitude. At that moment, Mr. Morpeth entered. He bowed to everyone and drew near his daughter. As he bent down to speak to her, his eyes rested on the brooch, and he stopped short.

"What is the matter?" cried Fanny, astonished.

"I didn't know you had a jewel like that," he said, designating the diamond clasp by a glance.

Miss Morpeth looked confused.

"How long have you had it?"

"Only since this evening."

He drew nearer and examined it more closely.

"Where did you buy it?"

"I didn't buy it," replied she, fearing to raise her eyes.

Mr. Morpeth started,—surprised.

"Was it given to you?"

She did not reply. He turned toward her quickly. "Where did Mr. Launay get that brooch?"

"It was left him by his mother."

"Did he tell you so?"

"He told me so."

Mr. Morpeth's face grew darker; he asked her for the jewel, which she took off with trembling hands, and began to walk to and fro in the long room. His eyes wandered to the farthest corner of the parlor, where Launay was standing in the midst of the guests, who had heard and seen nothing of the event. Then, as though he had taken a sudden resolution, he drew near the group.

They were talking about the expedition of the steamer Euphrates and the dangers of explorers among the savages in the countries from which that vessel was returning.

"The dangers of travel in Europe are perhaps no less great," said Mr. Morpeth, joining in the conversation.

"In Greece and Italy, perhaps," said one of the listeners, "but not in France."

"*Especially* in France. Why I, who am talking to you, not more than twelve years ago, was attacked and killed on a French highway."

"Killed! What do you mean?" cried they all, bringing their chairs closer and crowding near the speaker.

"It is not much of a story, though it certainly seemed a great deal to me. I was travelling through Brittany on my way to Paris in a post-chaise, carrying with me bank-notes to the amount of 400,000 francs. I was alone, with no one but the postilion in the box, and we had to cross an immense plain—the plain of *St. Michael*. When we had arrived there night had come on and it was already very dark. The chaise was rolling in the moist sand so noiselessly that neither the sound of the horses' feet nor the wheels of the carriage could be heard. There was something weird in the whole scene, and I felt as though I were being swept away into the night. At my side I could see white forms moving about and alternately appearing and disappearing. A confused murmur like the hum of a great multitude came from that direction—the noise of the waves at low tide. For ten minutes we rolled along thus, and I was intent on the strange panorama unrolling itself before my eyes, when the carriage passed by an immense boulder lying in the hollow of the sandy plain, like the Egyptian sphinx in the desert.

"*Irglas*," said the postilion to me, pointing out the huge boulder with his whip. Never was I to forget that name. Hardly had we passed the rock than the chaise stopped suddenly. I heard a deadened noise, like the sound of a man falling heavily to the ground. I sprang to the door of the chaise, but I had not time to see anything, for I fell back instantly into the carriage with a frightful cut in my head and literally bathed with blood."

A low murmur of horror interrupted him. He turned toward Launay who had not left his post but whose pallor was frightful.

"When I came to myself several days later, I learned that some fishermen had found me on the sands, where the carriage had been sacked and the driver killed. It took me three long months to recover from the effects of my wound."

"And were the murderers never found?" asked several voices at once.

"No. All that we did was of no avail. However I have not even yet given up all hope, for among the objects stolen was an iron box containing some family jewels, easily to be recognized, and among them a diamond brooch like this."

Mr. Morpeth held up the brooch, which he still held in his hand. Every one leaned forward to look at it more closely, when Miss Fanny uttered a loud cry; all eyes were turned in the direction in which she was looking. Edward Launay was standing against the wall with the pallor and the rigidity of death.

"What is the matter?" cried every one at once.

Mr. Morpeth rose. "I'll tell you what is the matter——"

"Oh, father, father!" cried Miss Fanny, rushing to him with both hands extended in a piteous appeal.

Mr. Morpeth stopped in the midst of what he was saying and came forward to meet his daughter, just as she fell fainting to the floor.

He carried her to her room, and the care which he was obliged to bestow upon her prevented him from thinking of anything else. He did not leave her, until exhausted, she had fallen asleep, when he silently withdrew into the apartment adjoining hers, and was walking anxiously to and fro, when the door opened and Edward Launay appeared upon the threshold. Mr. Morpeth fell back in horrified surprise. The young man stopped short;—there was such sad humility in his look that Mr. Morpeth was reassured.

"You were probably not expecting me," said Launay in a low tone.

"You are right; murderers are generally more prudent."

"And I should be, sir, if I were a murderer, but I came to prove to you that I am not so guilty as you think. These papers will show you that at the time the crime was committed I was cruising in the Mediterranean sea as the surgeon of the government vessel 'Aleda.'"

Mr. Morpeth glanced at the papers which Launay held out to him.

"Where did you get this brooch, then? And why were your confusion and your agitation so great when I told you the story of the murder? There is no question but that you know something of the crime."

"I do."

You gave this brooch to my daughter and told her it was

an heirloom in your family. Perhaps it was one of your family who committed the crime?"

"No, no," cried he; "my family is an honorable and respected one."

"Then what connection have you with this crime?"

"Will you let me tell you?"

Mr. Morpeth made a gesture of assent, and Launay told him everything, as it had happened—what Cranou had disclosed to him, how the convict had died in jail, how he (Launay) had gone to *Irglas*, to look for the buried treasure, and what his success had been. When he had finished—and he omitted not the slightest details—he handed a little package to Mr. Morpeth.

"You will find in it your four hundred thousand francs," said he, "in government bonds, and this casket contains all the jewels that were stolen from you."

"Sir," said Mr. Morpeth to Launay, with great and visible embarrassment, "what you have told me is so strange, and this restitution is so unexpected, that I scarcely know whether to thank or to blame you. Your fault is a grave one."

"Fault?" interrupted Launay. "Oh, do not call it a fault. It is a crime. I resisted a long time, but I thought of nothing but the hidden casket. Every night I dreamed of *Irglas* and of the fortune there, known only to me. When one of the officers barely acknowledged my bow, when a lady passed by unconscious of my presence, '*Oh! Irglas, Irglas!*' I thought. Everything is there, courtesy, wealth and women's smiles. I had only to say '*I will*' and my fortune was made. To be a wealthy man I had only to wipe away the blood with which another had stained the treasure, and bear it away with me. I resisted a long time, only to succumb to the temptation at last."

"But with my poverty I lost my peaceful rest. A shadow followed me everywhere, whispering *Irglas* in my ear. It seemed to me that at every moment a voice would cry out aloud to me, '*give back what you have stolen.*' My life was poisoned. I was afraid—afraid of everything, as children are of the dark; instinctively afraid, and without knowing why."

Launay stopped for an instant, then, resuming, said: "But what do these things matter to you?"—then he stopped short again, as if he wished for something, which he dared not ask.

"We will never see each other again," he said, in a broken voice, and with eyes fixed upon the ground—"but I had thought—I had hoped— Oh! let me see her once more, before I go away forever."

Mr. Morpeth did not answer.

"I understand," said Edward, sadly, "you do not think me worthy to see her again. Adieu."

He bowed and was about to leave the room, when Fanny suddenly appeared. She was clad in white, her disheveled hair lay upon her shoulder, and her eyes shone with the brilliancy of fever. Launay could not strain a cry, and the lovers remained face to face, immovable and breathless. Mr. Morpeth sprang to his daughter's side.

"Return to your room, at once," he cried.

"Oh, Mr. Morpeth, don't deprive me of this last interview," implored Launay in such a heart-breaking tone that the young girl melted into tears.

"Let me thank you, Miss Morpeth, for your coming. I had feared I should never see you again."

"I have heard it all," stammered she, in the midst of her sobs.

"And you despise me?"

Instead of replying, she threw herself upon his breast. Launay had so little expected this outburst of confidence and love, that he remained benumbed with joy, and awakening to his happiness, clasped her to his heart, and covered her hair with kisses.

Mr. Morpeth who had remained stupefied with astonish-

ment, violently grasped his daughter's arm, and sought to withdraw her from Launay's embrace.

"Leave me, father!" she cried, wildly. "I have promised to be his."



"Fanny, you are mad."

"I have promised to be his. I shall never leave him. Never till I die!"

"Sir," said Mr. Morpeth, trembling with anger, "if you value your life, leave my child at once;" and carried away by his passion, he drew his daughter to him with one hand while he menaced Launay with the other.

"Oh, no violence, sir," cried the latter with an effort. "Do not be afraid. I should never have accepted the sacrifice of your daughter's life. I did not care to live when I was poor. Do you think I care to live now, when I am not only poor, but dishonored? Take your daughter away. Can't you see that the poison is doing its work? Can't you see that I am dying?"

Fanny uttered a scream. She sprang forward just in time to catch him as he fell, and, with his head upon her breast, he expired.



ETCHING: THE TEST*

BY S. L. BACON

In the days of the past, which holds many legends, a story runneth thus.

There was a woman more beautiful than any other woman, and so more loved than any other woman. Her hair was like amber when the sun-light is upon it, and her eyes were gray like the sea. Two men there were who loved her with an exceeding love. It was a love that burned and ate into their hearts. It was a love which had no master. Now they were painters and, next to the woman, they loved their art. Yet they were friends.

And they came to the woman that she might choose between them. In her eyes there was a calm—on her lips there was a doubt. She said: "Which one of you paints me a picture most true to life, will be most true to me—and him I will accept." So she left them.

And one of them went out into the woods and fields and listened to the birds and to all nature's life, and he cried to the sea and to the winds and to the elements: "Give me inspiration!" But the other sat in his attic, and he said to his heart: "Help me!"

So when the day came, the woman with amber hair, and eyes gray like the sea, came to where the painters stood together, and her face was more beautiful than the morning, and her voice was as when the stars sang together.

And he, the first, cried triumphantly as he drew back his curtain. "These cherries are mine, and see as they hang, painted, the birds of the air have pecked them. I have deceived nature herself!"

And his heart warmed and glowed with triumph and love.

"Thou hast indeed done well," cried the woman. Then turning to where the other stood: "Surely thou can'st do no more than that, yet draw back the curtain that we may see."

Then he turned to her, and his eyes were full of a joy unspeakable. "With love, nothing is impossible. I can not draw back my curtain. I have but painted as life paints her greatest picture, the one we may not penetrate. I have deceived, not the birds of the air, but you. The curtain is mine, and thou art mine—mine forever!" And from afar, the echo came—forever!

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OLD ROSES*

BY GILBERT PARKER.

It was a barren country, and Wadgery was generally shrivelled with heat, but he always had roses in his garden, on his window-sill, or in his button-hole. Growing flowers under difficulties was his recreation. That was why he was called Old Roses. It was not otherwise inapt, for there was something antique about him, though he wasn't old; a flavor, an old-fashioned repose and self-possession. He was Inspector of Tanks for this God-forsaken country. Apart from his duties he kept mostly to himself, though when not travelling he always went down to O'Fallen's Hotel once a day for a glass of whisky and water—whisky kept especially for him; and as he drank this slowly he talked to Vic the barmaid, or to any chance visitors whom he knew. He never drank with anyone, nor asked anyone to drink; and, strange to say, no one resented this. As Vic said, "He was different." Dicky Merritt, the solicitor, who was hail-fellow with squatter, homestead lessee, cockatoo-farmer, and shearer, called him "a lively old buffer." It was he, indeed, who gave him the name of Old Roses. Dicky sometimes went over to Long Neck Billabong, where Old Roses lived, for a reel, as he put it, and he always carried away a deep impression of the Inspector's qualities. "Had his day," said Dicky in O'Fallen's sitting-room one night, "in marble halls, or I'm a Jack. Run neck and neck with almighty swells once. Might live here for a thousand years and he'd still be the nonsuch of the back blocks. I'd patent him—file my caveat for him to-morrow if I could—bully Old Roses!"

Victoria Dowling, the barmaid, lifted her chin slightly from her hands, as she leaned through the opening between the bar and the sitting-room, and said: "Mr. Merritt, Old Roses is a gentleman; and a gentleman is a gentleman till he——"

"Till he humps his bluey into the Never Never Land, Vic? But what do you know about gentlemen, anyway?"

* The story of a forgotten man. From "The Speaker."

You were born five miles from the Jumping Sandhills, my dear!"

"Oh," was the quiet reply, "a woman—the commonest woman—knows a gentleman by instinct. It isn't what they do, it's what they don't do; and Old Roses doesn't do lots of things."

"Right you are, Victoria, right you are again! You do the Jumping Sandhills credit. Old Roses has the root of the matter in him—and there you have it!"

Dicky had a profound admiration for Vic. She had brains, was perfectly fearless, no man had ever taken a liberty with her, and everyone in the Wadgery country who visited O'Fallen's had a wholesome respect for her opinion.

About this time news came that the Governor, Lord Malice, would pass through Wadgery on his tour up the back-blocks. A great function was necessary. It was arranged. Then came the question of the address of welcome to be delivered at the banquet. Dickey Merritt and the local doctor were proposed as composers, but they both declared they'd only "make rot of it," and suggested Old Roses.

They went to lay the thing before him. They found him in his garden. He greeted them, smiling in his quiet, enigmatical way, and listened. While Dicky spoke, a flush slowly passed over him, and then immediately left him pale; but he stood perfectly still, his hand leaning against a sandal tree, and the coldness of his face warmed up again slowly. His head having been bent attentively as he listened, they did not see anything unusual.

After a moment of silence and inscrutable deliberation, he answered that he would do as they wished. Dicky hinted that he would require some information about Lord Malice's past career and his family's history, but he assured them that he did not need it; and his eyes idled somewhat ironically with Dicky's face.

When the two had gone, Old Roses sat in his room, a handful of letters, a photograph, and a couple of decorations spread out before him; his fingers resting on them, and his look engaged with a very far horizon.

The Governor came. He was met outside the township by the citizens and escorted in—a dusty and numerous cavalcade. They passed the Inspector's house. The garden was bloom-

ing, and on the roof a flag was flying. Struck by the singular character of the place, Lord Malice asked who lived there, and proposed stopping for a moment to make the acquaintance of its owner, adding, with some slight sarcasm, that if the officers of the Government were too busy to pay their respects to their Governor, their Governor must pay his respects to them. But Old Roses was not in the garden nor the house, and they left without seeing him. He was sitting under a willow at the Billabong, reading over and over to himself the address to be delivered before the Governor in the evening. And, as he read, his face had a wintry and inhospitable look.

The night came. Old Roses entered the dining-room quietly with the crowd, far in the Governor's wake. According to his request, he was given a seat in a distant corner, where he was quite inconspicuous. Most of the men present were in evening dress. He wore a plain tweed suit, but carried a handsome rose in his button-hole. It was impossible to put him at a disadvantage. He looked distinguished as he was. He appeared to be much interested in Lord Malice. The early proceedings were cordial, for the Governor and his suite made themselves most agreeable, and talk flowed amiably. After a time there was a rattle of knives and forks, and the Chairman rose. Then, after a chorus of "hear, hears," there was a general silence. The doorways of the room were filled by the women-servants of the hotel. Chief among them was Vic, who kept her eyes mostly on Old Roses. She knew that he was to read the address and speak, and she was more interested in him and his success than in Lord Malice and suite. Her admiration of him was great. He had always treated her as a lady, and it had done her good. He had looked earnestly and kindly into her brown eyes, and——

"And I call upon Mr. Adam Sherwood to speak to the health of His Excellency, Lord Malice."

In his modest corner Old Roses stretched to his feet. The Governor glanced over carelessly. He only saw a figure in grey, with a rose at button-hole. The Chairman whispered that it was the owner of the house and garden which had interested His Excellency that afternoon. His Excellency look a little closer, but saw only a rim of iron-gray hair above the paper held before Old Roses' face.

"Then a voice came from behind the paper: "Your Excellency, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen——"

At the first word the Governor started, and his eyes flashed searchingly, curiously at the paper that walled the face and at the iron-gray hair. The voice rose distinct and clear, with modulated emphasis. It had a peculiarly penetrating quality. A few in the room—and particularly Vic—were struck by something in the voice—that it resembled another. She soon found the trail. Her eyes also fastened on the paper. Then she moved and went to another door. Here she could see behind the paper, at an angle. Her eyes ran from the screened face to that of the Governor. His Excellency had dropped the lower part of his face in his hand, and he was listening intently. Vic noticed that his eyes were painfully grave and concerned. She also noticed other things.

The address was strange. It had been submitted to the Committee, and though it struck them as out-of-the-wayish, it had been approved. It seemed different when read as *Old Roses* was reading it. The words sounded so inclement as they were chiselled out by the speaker's voice. Dicky Merritt afterwards declared that many phrases were interpolated by *Old Roses* at the moment.

The speaker referred intimately and with peculiar knowledge to the family history of Lord Malice, to certain more or less private matters which did not concern the public, to the antiquity of the name, and the high duty devolving upon one who bore the Earldom of Malice. He dwelt upon the personal character of His Excellency's antecedents, and praised their honorable services to the country. He referred to the death of Lord Malice's eldest brother in Burmah, but he did it strangely. Then, with acute incisiveness, he drew a picture of what a person in so exalted a position as a Governor should be and should not be. His voice assuredly had at this point a fine edge of scorn. The aides-de-camp were nervous, the Chairman apprehensive, the Committee ill at ease. But the Governor now was perfectly still, though as Vic Dowling thought, rather pinched and old looking. His fingers toyed with a wine glass, but his eyes never wavered from that paper nor the gray hair.

Presently the voice of the speaker changed.

"But," said he, "in Lord Malice we have—the perfect Governor; a man of blameless and enviable life, and possessed

abundantly of discreetness, judgment, administrative ability and power: the absolute type of English nobility and British character!"

Then he dropped the paper from before his face, and his eyes met those of the Governor, and stayed. Lord Malice let go a long choking breath, which sounded very like immeasurable relief. During the rest of the speech—delivered in a fine-tempered voice—he sat as in a dream, yet his eyes intently upon the other, who now seemed to recite rather than read. He thrilled all by the pleasant resonance of his tones, and sent the blood aching delightfully through Vic Dowling's veins.

When he sat down there was immense applause. The Governor rose in reply. He spoke in a low voice, but anyone listening outside would have said that *Old Roses* was still speaking. By this resemblance the girl, Vic, had trailed to others. It was now apparent to many, but Dicky said afterwards that it was simply a case of birth and breeding—men used to walking red carpet grew alike, just as studowners and rabbit-catchers did.

The last words of the Governor's reply were delivered in a very convincing tone as his eyes hung on *Old Roses'* face. "And, as I am indebted to you, gentlemen, for the feelings of loyalty to the Throne which prompted this reception and the address just delivered, so am I indebted to Mr. — Adam Sherwood for his admirable language and the unusual sincerity of his speaking; and to both you and him for most notable kindness." Immediately after the Governor's speech *Old Roses* stole out; but as he passed through the door where Vic stood, his hand brushed against hers. Feeling its touch, he grasped it eagerly for an instant, as though he was glad of the friendliness in her eyes.

It was just before dawn of the morning that the Governor knocked at the door of the house by Long Neck Billabong. The door opened almost at once, and he entered without a word.

He and *Old Roses* stood face to face. His face was drawn and worn, the other's cold and calm.

"Tom, Tom," Lord Malice said, "we thought you were dead—"

"That is, Edward, having left me to my fate in Burmah—

you were only a half mile away with a column of stout soldiers and hillmen—you waited till my death was reported, and seemed assured, and then came on to England for two things : to take the title, just vacant by our father's death, and to marry my intended wife, who, God knows, appeared to have little care which brother it was. You got both. I was long a prisoner. When I got free, I knew ; I waited. I was waiting till you had a child. Twelve years have gone: you have no child. But I shall spare you yet awhile. If your wife should die, or you should yet have a child, I shall return."

The Governor lifted his head wearily from the table where he now sat. "Tom," he said in a low, heavy voice, "I was always something of a scoundrel, but I've repented of that thing every day of my life since. It has been knives—knives all the way. . . . I am glad—I can't tell you how glad—that you are alive.

He stretched out his hand with a motion of great relief. "I was afraid you were going to speak to-night—to tell all, even though I was your brother. You spared me for the sake——"

"For the sake of our name," the other interjected stonily.

"For the sake of our name. But I would have taken my punishment, taken it in thankfulness, because you are alive."

"Taken it like a man, your Excellency," was the low rejoinder.

"You will not wipe the thing out, Tom?" said the other anxiously.

Tom Hallwood dried the perspiration from his forehead.

"It can never be wiped out. For you shook all my faith in my old world. That's the worst thing that can happen a man. I only believe in the very common people now—those who are not put upon their honor. One doesn't expect it of them, and, unlikely as it is, one isn't often deceived in them. . . . I think we'd better talk no more about it."

"You mean I had better go, Tom."

"I think so. I am going to marry soon." The other started nervously. "You needn't be so shocked. I'll come back one day, but not till your wife dies, or you have a child, as I said."

The Governor rose to his feet and went to the door. "Whom do you intend marrying?" he asked in a voice far from regal or vice-regal; only humbled and disturbed. The reply was instant and keen, "A barmaid."

The other's hand dropped from the door. But Old Roses, passing over, opened it, and, mutely waiting for the other to pass through, said: "I do not at all doubt but there will be issue. Good-day, my Lord!"

The Governor passed out from the pale light of the lamp into the gray and morning. He turned at a point where the house would be lost to view, and saw the other still standing there. The voice of Old Roses kept ringing in his ears sardonically. He knew that his punishment must go on and on.

And it did. Old Roses married Victoria Dowling from the Jumping Sandhills, and there was comely issue, and that issue is now at Eton; for Esau came into his birthright, as he hinted he would, at his own time. But he and his wife have a way of being indifferent to the gay, astonished world. And, uncommon as it may seem, he has not tired of her.



THE WHITE WITCH *

BY E. NESBIT

The Shepherd loved the Princess—that was the beginning of the trouble, for, of course, it was a very wrong, and impossible, and altogether unsuitable thing for the Shepherd to do. He was a very good Shepherd, and, until he saw the Princess, he looked after his sheep on the green sunny hills all day and brought them safely home every night; and if he ever dreamed dreams as he lay on the short thymey turf and looked up to the deep blue sky, he certainly never told them to any one, so nobody was the worse or the wiser.

But there came a day—a May day—when the Princess went out at sunrise to gather dew for a charm to keep her always beautiful. She had good reason to wish to be always as she was, the Shepherd thought, for she was more beautiful than any man's dearest dream

She had long yellow hair, pale like ripe corn; her eyes were as blue as corn-flowers, her lips just the shape for speaking kindly; her hands were like little white birds to hold, and when she passed, the may-tree opened all its buds to look at her.

The Shepherd, lying behind a furze-bush, saw her kneel down and lay her white hands on the green grass to gather the chill, sweet dew, smelling of the morning and the wild thyme. She rubbed the dew on her face, which grew radiant with a new beauty. The shepherd arose and came slowly toward her. She did not see him till he was quite close to her, and a fold of her long rosy sleeve blew across his arm as he held out his hand to her.

"Will you marry me?" he said; "I shall love you always."

She turned her eyes on him, and the love in his lit a rose-light in her cheeks.

"Who are you?" she asked in a low voice; and if he had been able to say that he was a prince, one does not know what her answer would have been. But he only said:

"I am the King's Shepherd."

* The story of a shepherd's love. From "The Argonaut."

"And I," she cried, "am the King's daughter." And then she began to laugh, and ran all the way home, and in a day and a night she had forgotten all about him.

But he thought always of her, so that when, one market day, the heralds went through the town proclaiming that a tournament was to be held in honor of the Princess, and that the bravest knight might hope to win her, he came, wearing a rusty suit of armor he had borrowed from a friend, and riding an old horse that his uncle, the innkeeper, lent to him, to try his fortune with many others. And he looked so handsome and so valiant that no one even noticed the old horse and the shabby armor, and every girl in the assembled crowd wished in her heart that he might win the Princess. Nor did any know him to be the Shepherd. But the Princess knew.

Then, one by one, all the knights who had come to the tournament were overthrown by the Shepherd, for love made him brave and strong beyond the wont of man. But when he rode beneath the gallery where the Princess sat, she turned her eyes away as she gave him her hand to kiss, and the wreath, the prize of the tourney.

"He is only your shepherd," she said to her father, and the King was very much annoyed.

Indeed, it became so tiresome to have a handsome shepherd, and a shepherd in love, always hanging about the palace, that the Princess said to her tutor: "How can I get rid of this young man without hurting his feelings?"

"Tell him you have made a vow never to marry any man whose eyes are not green," suggested the tutor.

"What a capital idea!" cried the Princess, clapping her hands. "He can't be hurt at that, can he?"

The tutor's eyes were green; but the Princess had never noticed that, because she never looked at him.

So next day she sent for the Shepherd. He came gladly, for, whatever she had to say, he would, at least, hear her voice and look into her eyes.

The Princess was sitting in her garden, which has a high wall round it, and trees and flowers, and in the middle a marble basin where the goldfishes live. The Princess and her maidens were feeding the goldfishes when the Shepherd came in. "How do you do?" said the Princess, turning red and speaking very fast. "Do you know I'm very sorry, and

I hope you won't mind very much, but I really can't marry any one unless they have green eyes."

"What color are mine?" asked the Shepherd. "I have never noticed"—but his heart ached, for he knew well enough that they were not green.

"They are blue," said the Princess, jumping up and looking at them. "They are blue like mine." She looked at them a long time without speaking. Then she said: "They are blue—a very nice blue you know." She put her hands on his shoulders and looked again—a longer look still.

"No—they're *not* green," she said, and she sighed. "Good-bye. I hope we shall always be friends. I shall always feel to you like a sister. Good-bye"—and she went on feeding the goldfishes.

"Good-bye," said the Shepherd; "will you give me nothing before I go?"

She held out her hand, and he kissed it.

"That is the second time," he said; "the third time my eyes will be green!"

The Princess looked after him till he had passed out of the garden. Then she looked at the hand he had kissed. Then she sighed again; and when the tutor came to ask her to read classic poetry with him she said she had a headache.

After that she used to spend most of her time in the garden, and when her father pressed her to choose a husband from among her many suitors, she answered that she thought marriage was rather a serious thing, and, perhaps, it would be better for her to stay at home and feed the goldfishes a little longer. The next morning she said, carelessly, to her maidens, as they combed out her golden hair: "I suppose nothing more has been heard of that Shepherd?"

"No, your Royal Highness. Nothing at all."

And the next day she said, musingly, as the golden comb went through her hair: "I wonder what has become of that Shepherd!"

"I wonder, indeed, your Royal Highness," said the maidens.

The third morning, as they braided her tresses, she spoke again: "I suppose that Shepherd has not come back?"

"No," they said, "he has not come back."

The Princess sighed and was silent; but she put the same question the next morning, and the next, and every morning, and there was never any other answer.

But the Shepherd fared forth into the world. Somewhere, he knew, must be that which would turn blue eyes to green. He asked every one he met; most laughed at him for a madman, and those who understood and were sorry for him could not help him. And so he fared on for the half of a year, and his eyes grew bluer than ever with unshed tears.

He had left far behind the mountain country where his Princess dwelt, and had come to a land of elms and meadows, green lanes, dim woods, and blossoming may-trees. Walking through this land one golden May morning, just a year after his first sight of his Princess, he passed into a wood, where everything was alive with Spring's greenest green. The moss was green under foot; the chestnuts, and oaks, and hazels were green overhead.

All through his long, weary quest of the charm that should win him his Princess, his faith in his finding of it had never faltered. He loved her so much, and love, he knew, works miracles. Now, looking on the green leaves and the green moss, he said: "Oh, wood! Have you no color to spare for me? Just a ray—enough to color a lover's eyes!"

And, as he spoke, he was aware of a White Lady, who lay on the moss under the shade of a hawthorn-bush. He paused to put his eternal question: "Can you tell me how to make blue eyes green?" and stood there ready to go on when he had heard the accustomed "No"; but, instead, the White Lady rose and came toward him, saying "Yes."

As she came near him, he saw that her hair was red, like the gold of sunset. Her arms were long and white. He had never seen any mouth like hers. She was gowned in white, about her was a girdle of may-blossoms; she wore a wreath of may-blossoms on her hair, and her eyes were green as the sea is green, and they shone like young lime-leaves when the sun kisses them after rain.

"I can help you," she said.

"And will you?"

"Yes; but the price is a heavy one."

"I will not," answered the Shepherd, "shrink from any price, how heavy soever it may be."

"Think well," said the White Lady; "the bargain once struck may not be undone."

"You would not," cried the Shepherd in sudden fear, "you would not—you will not kill love in my heart?"

"I will leave love in your heart?"

"You will not make my Princess turn from me when I am come to her again?"

"Your Princess shall not turn from you when you are come to her again."

"Then," cried the Shepherd, "I will pay the price."

The White Lady took him by the hands and drew him under the green hawthorn boughs, he wondering, yet glad at heart, because he should now, at last, win his Princess.

"You do not repent?"

"No!"

"Think yet again. It is not yet too late."

"I have only one thought—quick! say the spell!"

She laid her white arms round his neck as he stood under the may-tree. "Already," she said, "your eyes grow green!"

She kissed him thrice—upon the brow, and upon the eyes, and upon the lips.

"Now go!" she said, "go to your Princess—who loves you."

He threw up his hands and fell at her feet.

"But I do not want the Princess any more!" he cried.

"There is no Princess, there is only you, Kiss me again! Kiss me again!"

The White Lady leaned against the tree and laughed.

And far away in her palace the Princess was saying, for the hundred and eighty-third time, as the golden comb went through her hair: "I suppose the Shepherd has not come back?"

And for the hundred and eighty-third time her maidens answered: "No; and we do not think, your Royal Highness, that he will ever come back any more."

MY WONDERFUL ADVENTURES IN SKITZLAND*

Famous Story Series

The Beginning is a Bore—I fall into Misfortune



I AM fond of Gardening. I like to dig. If among the operations of the garden any need for such a work can be at any time discovered or invented, I like to dig a hole. On the 3d of March, 1849, I began a hole, behind the kitchen wall, whereinto it was originally intended to transplant a plum-tree. The exercise was so much to my taste that a strange humor impelled me to dig on. A fascination held me to the task. I neglected my business. I disappeared from the earth's surface. A boy who worked a basket by means of a rope and pulley aided me; so aided, I confined my whole attention to spade labor. The centripetal force seemed to have made me its especial victim. I dug on until Autumn. In the beginning of November I observed that, upon percussion, the sound given by the floor of my pit was resonant. I did not intermit my labor, urged as I was by a mysterious instinct downwards. On applying my ear, I occasionally heard a subdued sort of rattle, which caused me to form a theory that the centre of the earth might be composed of mucus. In November, the ground broke beneath me into a hollow and I fell a considerable distance. I alighted on the box-seat of a four-horse coach, which happened to be running at that time immediately underneath. The coachman took no notice what-



*This amusing and whimsical tale was printed, anonymously, some forty years ago in the first volume of *Household Words*, during the editorship of Charles Dickens. Illustrated for Short Stories by Charles Lederer.

ever of my sudden arrival by his side. He was so completely muffled up that I could observe only the skilful way in which he manipulated reins and whip. The horses were yellow. I had seen no more than this, when the guard's horn blew, and presently we pulled up at an inn. A waiter came out, and appeared to collect four bags from the passengers inside the coach. He then came round to me.

"Dine here, Sir?"

"Yes, certainly," said I. "I like to dine—not the sole point of resemblance between myself and the great Johnson."

"Trouble you for your stomach, Sir."



While the waiter was looking up with a polite stare into my puzzled face, my neighbor, the coachman, put one hand within his outer coat, as if to feel for money in his waistcoat pocket. Directly afterwards his fingers came again to light, and pulled forth an enormous sack. Notwithstanding that it was abnormally enlarged I knew by, observation of its form and texture, that this was a stomach with the œsophagus attached. This, then, the waiter caught as it was thrown down to him, and hung it carelessly over his arm, together with the four smaller bags (which I now knew to be also stomachs) collected from the passengers within the coach. I started up, and as I happened to look round, observed a skeleton face upon the shoulders of a gentleman who sat immediately behind my back. My own features were noticed at the same time by the guard who now came forward, touching his hat.

"Beg your pardon, Sir, but you've been and done it."

"Done what?"

"Why, Sir, you should have booked your place, and not come up in this clandestine way. However, you've been and done it!"

"My good man, what have I done?"

"Why, sir, the Baron Terroro's eyes had the box-seat, and I strongly suspect you've been and sat upon them."

I looked involuntarily to see whether I had been sitting upon anything except the simple cushion. Truly enough, there was an eye, which I had crushed and flattened.

"Only one," I said.

"Worse for you, and better for him. The other eye had time to escape, and it will know you again, that's certain. Well, it's no business of mine. Of course you've no appetite now for dinner? Better pay your fare, Sir. To the Green Hippopotamus and Spectacles, where we put up, it's ten-and-six."

"Is there room inside?" I inquired. It was advisable to shrink from observation.

"Yes, Sir. The inside passengers are mostly skeletons. There's room for three, Sir. Inside, one-pound-one."

I paid the money, and became an inside passenger.

Of Divisions which occur in Skitzland—I am taken up Professor Essig's Lectures on Anatomy had so fortified me that I did not shrink from entering the Skitzton coach. It contained living limbs, loose or attached to skeletons in other respects bare, except that they were clothed with broadcloth garments, cut after the English fashion. One passenger only had a complete face of flesh, he had also one living hand; the other hand I guessed was bony, because it was concealed in a glove obviously padded. By observing the fit of his clothes, I came to a conclusion that this gentleman was stuffed throughout; that all his limbs, except the head and hand, were artificial. Two pairs of legs, in woollen stockings, and a pair of ears, were in a corner of the coach, and in another corner there were nineteen or twenty scalps.



I thought it well to look astonished at nothing, and, having pointed in a careless manner to the scalps, asked what might be their destination? The person with the face and hand replied to me; and although evidently himself a gentleman, he addressed me with a tone of unconcealed respect.

"They are going to Skitzton, Sir, to the hair-dresser's."

"Yes, to be sure," I said. "They are to make Natural Skin Wigs. I might have known."

"I beg your pardon, Sir. There is a ball to-night at Culmsey. But the gentry do not like to employ village barbers, and, therefore, many of the better class of people send their

hair to Skitzton, and receive it back by the return coach properly cut and curled."

"Oh," said I. "Ah! Oh, indeed!"

"Dinners, gentlemen!" said a voice at the window, and the waiter handed in four stomachs, now tolerably well filled. Each passenger received his property, and pulling open his chest with as much composure as if he were unbuttoning his waistcoat, restored his stomach, with a dinner in it, to the right position. Then the reckonings were paid, and the coach started.

I thought of my garden, and much wished that somebody could throw Professor Essig down the hole that I had dug. A few things were to be met with in Skitzland which would rather puzzle him. They puzzled me; but I took refuge in silence, and so fortified, protected my ignorance from an exposure.

"You are going to Court, Sir, I presume?" said my Face and Hand friend, after a short pause. His was the only mouth in the coach, excepting mine, so that he was the only passenger able to enter into conversation.

"My dear Sir," I replied, "let me be frank with you. I have arrived here unexpectedly out of another world. Of the manners and customs, nay, of the very nature of the people who inhabit this country, I know nothing. For any information you can give me, I shall be very grateful."

My friend smiled incredulity, and said:

"Whatever you are pleased to profess, I will believe. What you are pleased to feign a wish for, I am proud to furnish. In Skitzland, the inhabitants, until they come of age, retain that illustrious appearance which you have been so fortunate as never to have lost. During the night of his twenty-



first birthday, each Skitzlander loses the limbs which up to that period have received from him no care, no education. Of those neglected parts the skeletons alone remain, but all those organs which he has employed sufficiently continue unimpaired. I, for example, devoted to the study of the law, forgot all occupation but to think, to use my senses and to write. I rarely used my legs, and therefore Nature has deprived me of them."

"But," I observed, "it seems that in Skitzland you are able to take yourselves to pieces."

"No one has that power, Sir, more largely than yourself. What organs we have we can detach on any service. When dispersed, a simple force of Nature directs all corresponding members whither to fly that they may re-assemble."

"If they can fly," I asked, "why are they sent in coaches? There were a pair of eyes on the box-seat."

"Simply for safety against accidents. Eyes flying alone are likely to be seized by birds, and incur many dangers. They are sent, therefore, usually under protection, like any other valuable parcel."

"Do many accidents occur?"

"Very few. For mutual protection, and also because a single member is often all that has been left existing of a fellow Skitzlander; our laws, as you, Sir, know much better than myself, estimate the destruction of any part absent on duty from its skeleton as a crime equivalent to murder——"

After this I held my tongue. Presently my friend again inquired whether I was going up to Court?

"Why should I go to Court?"

"Oh, Sir, it pleases you to be facetious. You must be aware that any Skitzlander who has been left by Nature in possession of every limb, sits in the Assembly of the Perfect, or the Upper House, and receives many state emoluments and dignities."

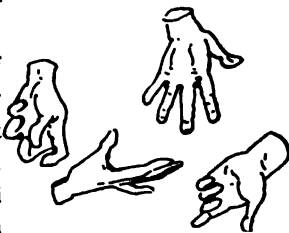
"Are there many members of that Upper Assembly?"

"Sir, there were forty-two. But if you are now travelling to claim your seat, the number will be raised to forty-three."

"The Baron Terroro—" I hinted.

"My brother, Sir. His eyes are on the box-seat under my care. Undoubtedly he is a member of the Upper House."

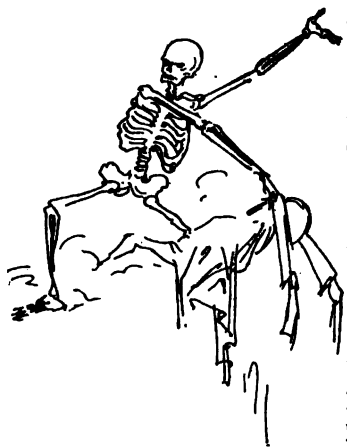
I was now anxious to get out of the coach as soon as possible. My wish was fulfilled after the next pause. One eye, followed by six pairs of arms, with strong hard hands belonging to them, flew in



at the window. I was collared; the door was opened, and all hands were at work to drag me out and away. The twelve hands whisked me through the air, while the one eye sailed before us, like an old bird, leader of the flight.

MY IMPRISONMENT AND TRIAL FOR MURDER

What sort of sky have they in Skitzland? Our earth overarches them, and, as the sunlight filters through, it causes a subdued illumination with very pure rays. Skitzland is situated nearly in the centre of our globe; it hangs there like a shrunk kernel in the middle of a nutshell. The height from Skitzland to the over-arching canopy is great; so great, that if I had not fallen personally from above the firmament, I should have considered it to be a blue sky similar to ours. At night it is quite dark, but during the day there is an appearance in the heaven of white spots; their glistening reminded me of stars. I noticed them as I was being conveyed to prison by the strong arms of justice, for it was by a detachment of members from the Skitzton police that I was now hurried along. The air was very warm,



and corroborated the common observation of an increase of heat as you get into the pith of our planet. The theory of Central Fire, however, is, you perceive, quite overturned by my experience.

We alighted near the outskirts of a large and busy town. Through its streets I was dragged publicly, much stared at, and much staring. The street life was one busy nightmare of disjointed limbs. Professor Essig, could he have been dragged through Skitzton, would have delivered his farewell lecture upon his return. "Gentlemen, Fuit Ilium—

Fuit Ischium—Fuit Sacrum—Anatomy has lost her seat among the sciences. My occupation's gone." Professor Owen's book "On the Nature of Limbs," must contain, in the next edition, an appendix "Upon Limbs in Skitzland." I was dragged through the streets to prison and there duly chained, after having been subjected to the scrutiny of about fifty couples of eyes drawn up in a line within the prison door. I was chained in a dark cell, a cell so dark that I could very faintly perceive the figure of some being who was my companion. Whether this individual had ears wherewith to hear, and mouth wherewith to answer me, I could not see, but at a venture I addressed him. My thirst for information was unconquerable; I began, therefore, immediately with a question:

"Friend, what are those stars which we see shining in the sky at mid-day?"

An awful groan being an unsatisfactory reply, I asked again.

"Man, do not mock at misery. You will yourself be one of them."

"'The Teachers shall shine like Stars in the Firmament.'"
I have a propensity for teaching, but was puzzled to discover how I could give so practical an illustration of the text of Fichte.

"Believe me," I said, "I am strangely ignorant. Explain yourself."

He answered with a hollow voice:

"Murderers are shot out of mortars into the sky, and stick there. Those white, glistening specks, they are their skeletons."

Justice is prompt in Skitzland. I was tried, incredibly fast, by a jury of twelve men who had absolutely heads. The judges had nothing but brain, mouth and ear. Three powerful tongues defended me, but as they were not suffered to talk nonsense, they had little to say. The whole case was too clear to be talked into cloudiness. Baron Terroro, in person, deposed that he had sent his eyes to see a friend at Culmsey, and that they were returning on the Skitzton coach, when I, illegally, came with my whole bulk upon the box-seat, which he occupied. That one of his eyes was, in that manner, totally destroyed, but that the other eye, having escaped, identified me, and brought to his brain intelligence of the calamity which had befallen. He deposed further, that having received this information, he despatched his uncrushed eye with arms from the police-office, and accompanied with several members of the detective force, to capture the offender, and to procure the full proofs of my crime. A sub-inspector of Skitzton Police then deposed that he sent three of his faculties with his mouth, eye, and ear, to meet the coach. That the driver, consisting only of a stomach and hands, had been unable to observe what passed. That the guard, on the contrary, had taxed me with my deed, that he had seen me rise from my seat upon the murdered eye, and that he had heard me make confession of my guilt. The guard



was brought next into court, and told his tale. Then I was called upon for my defence. If a man, wearing a cloth coat and trousers and talking excellent English, were to plead at the Old Bailey that he had broken into some citizen's premises, accidentally, by falling from the moon, his tale would be received in London as mine was in Skitzton. I was severely reprimanded for my levity, and ordered to be silent. The Judge summed up and the jury found me guilty. The Judge, who had put on the black cap before the verdict was pronounced, held out no hope of mercy, and straightway sentenced me to death, according to laws and usage of the Realm.

THE LAST HOURS OF THE CONDEMNED IN SKITZLAND—

I AM EXECUTED

The period which intervenes between the sentence and execution of a criminal in Skitzland is not longer than three hours. In order to increase the terror of death by contrast, the condemned man is suffered to taste at the table of life, from which he is banished, the most luscious viands. All the attainable enjoyment that his wit can ask for, he is allowed to have during the three hours before he is shot, like rubbish, off the fields of Skitzland.

Under guard, of course, I was now to be led whithersoever I desired.

Several churches were open. They never are all shut in Skitzton. I was taken into one. A man with heart and life, was preaching. People with hearts were in some pews; people with brains, in others; people with ears only, in some. In a neighboring church, there was a popular preacher, a skeleton with life. His congregation was a crowd of ears, and nothing more.

There was a day-performance at the Opera. I went to that. Fine lungs and mouths possessed the stage, and afterwards there was a great bewilderment with legs. I was surprised to notice that many of the most beautiful ladies were carried in and out, and lifted about like dolls. My guides sneered at my pretence of ignorance, when I asked why this was. But they were bound to please me in all practicable ways, so they informed me, although somewhat pettishly. It seems that in Skitzland, ladies who possess and have cultivated only their good looks, lose at the age of

twenty-one all other endowments. So they become literally dolls, but dolls of a superior kind; for they can not only open and shut their eyes, but also sigh; wag slowly with their heads, and sometimes take a pocket-handkerchief out of a bag, and drop it. But as their limbs are powerless, they have to be lifted and dragged about after the fashion that excited my astonishment.



I said then: "Let me see the poor." They took me to a workhouse. The men there, were all yellow; and they wore a dress which looked as though it were composed of asphalt; it had also a smell like that of pitch. I asked for explanation of these things.

A superintendent of police remarked that I was losing opportunities of real enjoyment for the idle purpose of persisting in my fable of having dropped down from the sky. However, I compelled him to explain to me what was the reason of these things. The information I obtained was briefly this:—that Nature, in Skitzland, never removes the stomach. Every man has to feed himself; and the necessity for finding food, joined to the necessity for buying clothes, is a mainspring whereby the whole clockwork of civilized life is kept in motion. Now, if a man positively can not feed



and clothe himself, he becomes a pauper. He then goes to the workhouse, where he has his stomach filled with a cement. That stopping lasts a lifetime, and he thereafter needs no food. His body, however, becomes yellow by the superfluity of bile.

The yellow-boy, which is the Skitzland epithet for pauper, is at the same time provided with a suit of clothes. The clothes are of a material so tough that they can be worn unrepaired for more than eighty years. The

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pauper is now freed from care, but were he in his state cast loose upon society, since he has not that stimulus to labor which excites industry in other men, he would become an element of danger in the state. Nature no longer compelling him to work, the law compels him. The remainder of his life is forfeit to the uses of his country. He labors at the workhouse costing nothing more than the expense of lodging, after the first inconsiderable outlay for cement wherewith to plug his stomach, and for the one suit of apparel.

When we came out of the workhouse, all the bells in the town were tolling. The superintendent told me that I had frittered away time, for I had now no more than half an hour to live. Upon that I leaned my back against a post, and asked him to prepare me for my part in the impending ceremony by giving me a little information on the subject of executions.

I found that it was usual for a man to be executed with great ceremony upon the spot whereon his crime had been committed. That in case of rebellions or tumults in the provinces, when large numbers were not unfrequently condemned to death, the sentence of the law was carried out in the chief towns of the disturbed districts. That large numbers of



people were thus sometimes discharged from a single market-place, and that the repeated strokes appeared to shake, or crack, or pierce in some degree that portion of the sky towards which the artillery had been directed. I here at once saw that I had at once discovered the true cause of earthquakes and volcanoes; and this shows how great light may be thrown upon theories, concerning the hidden constitution of this

earth, by going more deeply into the matter of it than had been done by any one before I dug my hole. Our volcanoes, it is now proved, are situated over the market-places

of various provincial towns in Skitzland. When a revolution happens, the rebels are shot up—discharged from mortars by means of an explosive material evidently far more powerful than our gun-powder or gun-cotton; and they are pulverized by the friction in grinding their way through the earth. How simple and easy truth appears when we have once arrived at it.



The sound of muffled drums approached us, and a long procession turned the corner of a street. I was placed in the middle of it,—Baron Terrero by my side. All then began to float so rapidly away that I was nearly left alone, when forty arms came back and collared me. It was considered to be a proof of my re-

factory disposition, that I would make no use of my innate power of flight. I was therefore dragged in this procession swiftly through the air, drums playing, fifes lamenting.

We alighted on the spot where I had fallen, and the hole through which I had come I saw above me. It was very small, but the light from above shining more vividly through it made it look with its rough edges, like a crumpled moon. A quantity of some explosive liquid was poured into a large mortar, which had been erected (under the eye of Baron Terrero) exactly where my misfortune happened. I was then thrust in, the Baron ramming me down, and pounding with a long stock or pestle upon my head in a noticeably vicious manner. The Baron then cried "Fire!" and as I shot out, in the midst of a blaze, I saw him looking upward.



MY REVENGE ON THE SKITZLANDERS

By great fortune, they had planted their artillery so well that I was fired up through my hole again, and alighted in my own garden, just a little singed. My first thought was to

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run to an adjoining bed of vegetable marrows. Thirty vegetable marrows and two pumpkins I rained down to astonish the Skitzlanders, and I fervently hope that one of them may have knocked out the remaining eye of my vindictive enemy, the Baron. I then went into the pantry, and obtained a basket full of eggs, and having rained these down upon the Skitzlanders, I left them.

It was after breakfast when I went down to Skitzland, and I came back while the dinner bell was ringing.



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(See p. 425.)



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SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

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CONCERNING A WOMAN*

BY ANNETTA JOSEFA HALLIDAY.

"Men still live and therefore I have foes"—*Parsee maxim.*

"Nay, son, I said not so, but my mouth is thirsty for straight talk. Am I a fool and a liar? Listen—now by the Oath of the Cow, Juggat Singh, I swear thou shalt wed my daughter Ulsee or to-night pay me back the five hundred rupees I have advanced thee from time to time since thou camest out from the famine in Jeysumir two years gone."

"The cholera attacked the ship before we left the Hooghly," protested the young coolie, Juggat Singh, in a low tone.

"And thou gavest thy rupees to those who were as well able to work as thyself," interrupted the first speaker.

"It was but the veriest nothing, and there were husbands and wives and little children," began Juggat, eagerly.

"It matters not, son," said the other, with decision, "what lies close to my heart is that thou shouldst take my rupees, my rice, my cocoa-nut oil, my sugar. I would remit a little of the debt if thou wouldst pledge me thy wage-



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money for the three years to come, until thy time of indenture is served out. Also, that thou shouldst take my Ulsee to wife."

"But when I first sought thee," argued the coolie, "thou badest me take comfort, and my heart opened to thee, and it is not five hundred rupees, O Goupaldoo Ranee, it is but three hundred; thou countest with greed and exorbitance."

"Thou art a colt still unlicked," said Goupaldoo Ranee, contemptuously, "a little taste of English justice, a little acquaintance with the Dep'ty Sahib will be good for thy stomach."

"Then the Dep'ty Sahib is thy brother," retorted Juggat Singh. "An eater of flesh; I would pull thy turban for a half rupee. By the soul of my father I am a poor man and speak true talk."

"Dost thou marry my Ulsee?"

"Never," said the young coolie, with angry determination; "may she die unwed and thy white beard never know a grandchild. Thou can'st lie as easily as a fig slips down a dog's throat. A cobra is a cobra till it dies. *Ahi!* that I should have trusted thee!" and Juggat Singh, a beautiful, graceful lad of twenty-one, turned abruptly from his companion's presence and walked out into the road that led to his bamboo-thatched hut on the outskirts of the coolie village.

On each side of him stretched a wilderness partly forest, partly garden, in which the oleanders and jessamines rose sharply as cathedral spires among the thickets of mangoes and plantains, and where the roses and pomegranates ran mad in furious splendor, and seemed to set the orange-trees and *liane* on fire.

Trinidad is a wonderful island, distinct in scenery and population from all of the other Antilles. Everywhere the vehemence of flower-color stains the landscape controlled by green tones,—yellow-green, emerald-green, black-green, brown-green—but always green; and the blue distance of the hills nestles with a gray softness upon the bosom of the valleys, while the thousand varieties of trees,—those silent priests of a mighty Nature—raise their graceful heads in adoration to the tender blueness above them, or bowed in supplication before the cloud-dreams which pass swiftly like ghost-worlds edged with foam over the face of their god, the Sky.

But mere was no tropic charm in the loveliness about him that night for the young coolie Juggat Singh. He was thinking, as he walked rapidly homeward, of the far-away country of his birth, that golden Oriental land of enchantment which carries us back and makes us contemporaries of the ages that entombed the Pharaohs, and where one can almost hear the ebbing of the waves of time as they roll heavily and sultrily away.

He saw himself a youth of barely nineteen, listening to the tales of returned coolies from the West Indies, and ruminating with the avarice of all half-educated Hindoos, on the increase of wages in the New World, on the certainty that the Government would allow him a free passage back to Hindostan or exchange his right for a grant of ten acres of land, and then — who had such bright eyes and such a beautiful slender figure as fifteen-year-old Murgah, his playmate from childhood? And she had promised to wait until he should send for her to share his new home, or should come back to claim her as his bride.

And then had come apprenticeship for five years on a great English estate in southern Trinidad, adjoining the far-famed lake of pitch, where he was expected by the law to work nine hours of a West Indian day for two hundred and eighty days in the year; and among other things he had learned in this spot, which at first had seemed to him a green paradise created for Murgah and himself, came the knowledge that he needed protection against his own countrymen as well as against a covetous employer.

Juggat recollected how he had bought, bit by bit, a bangle or a bracelet or a ring of pure silver or gold with his first earnings and sent them home to Murgah. With each gift, it had seemed as if a piece of his heart leapt over the great miles of ocean to where the peach orchards of his country were in bloom and the water gurgled sweet and cold from the Himalaya snows.

And that he might send oftener the pretty trifles for her little feet and ankles, Juggat stinted himself of food; until one day the riot of blossom-color vexed his eyes, the gaseous smell of hot asphalt became intolerable, and he grew weary of the High Woods that had at first seemed to him such dreams of grace; unspeakable dizziness seized him and he was borne from the cane-field to the hospital, remembering

love with the beauty of Juggat Singh that life offered to her no temptation so potent as his presence.

"Thou shalt have him, my dove," her father had repeatedly said, "his stomach is crying for bread, and by the Temple of the blue-throated Mahadeo, it shall go unfilled until that folly called love enters his heart for thee, and he feeds thereon."

And to-night the fact that he was so deeply in debt as to ruin him stared Juggat in the face, and the fear of an English prison lay heavy on his heart. His unwisdom had virtually made him a slave for years to come, but youth is never wise.

Of his beautiful dream nothing remained.

"In the perspective," he said to himself sadly, "the vintage invited, but I have gathered and tasted and found the harvest dust and ashes!"

The old usurer stood in his doorway, as the coolie left him in anger, and watched the retreating figure until it disappeared in the gloom of the *liane* and *ceibas*; then he looked toward the strip of meadow land alternating with cane and cacao fields, and threw the drapery of his salmon-colored scarf backward.

"And all this would have been his one day," he thought angrily, "and he would have had my nightingale, my Ulsee. I will accomplish thy disgrace, thou pig!" and he shook his clenched fist fiercely toward the interspace, between the sombre foliage, where the road which Juggat had taken wound itself. "Thou hast called me without faith or honor but I will teach thee there is no love so strong as hate!"

The sunset filled the sky with a passion of fire, the insect voices of tropic darkness began to speak, and a pungent ammoniacal scent filled the air as Goupaldoo entered his house, seated himself upon a sofa spread with a tiger's skin, and called for his daughter.

He gazed at her fondly as she kneeled at his side and



placed an arm through his. She had the dark, amorous-lidded eyes of her nation, a pale brown complexion, a mouth like the heart of a cherry, and a figure whose slenderness told that the child had not yet become a woman.

She was draped modestly in a thin veil of rose-colored silk which glittered with ornaments of gold.

Goupaldoo crumpled her face with his hand.

"Thou art too fair, Bulbul," he said softly, all the sordid expression of daily life vanishing from his face, and leaving in its stead an intense devotion.



"Hast thou seen Juggat Singh, my father?" she cried anxiously, touching his shriveled hand with her lips.

"I bought thee a shawl of cashmere, in Port-of-Spain, this morning," answered the old man.

"Has thou seen him?"

"And gold and silver muslin for a turban," said the usurer, stroking her black hair.

"Let there be nothing hidden between us; tell me."

"Thou art worthy of all the pleasures of

the paradise of Siva, my treasure," murmured Goupaldoo. "Thou art the envy of all thy mates, my Ulsee."

"Thou hast seen him," cried the girl. "Thou hast seen Juggat Singh!"

"Yes," exclaimed the usurer, "may the judgment of the gods seize his heel! That coolie, oh my daughter, is a devil unchained. I speak with a clean heart; I have lent him money, I have offered him thee who art more to me even than rupees, and he has cast my gifts back in my face, be-

cause of a trull across the dark water. I am an old man, my Ulsee, and nearly blind, but by the Cow, I promise thee after I have sold the roan heifer, he shall pay dear interest."

Ulsee arose.

"And if thou doest that," she began, "what wouldst thou?"

Goupaldoo watched his daughter with half-shut eyes.

"Thou wouldst learn in good time that the jewel of thy love is too precious to bestow upon a slug like yonder coolie. Those there are who would make of thy fairness a temple and offer unto it the sacrifices that thy sex best love."

"Thou thinkest to know all, my father," said Ulsee, slowly.

"I will tell thee something that thou dost not know. Look upon this crimson violet. I tear it, I stamp upon it, I crush it, I destroy it. Is not its fragrance more strong than ever? Thou mayest strangle love out of all shape, my father, but thou canst not murder its memory. I am but a woman-child, and have not seen many years, but this I know. If thou killest him, thou strikest me as well."

"She speaks true talk," muttered the old man, as his daughter left him. "The flame in the eyes of a lover is more mighty than the sacred fire in the temples of mine own Bombay, and more worthy of worship than that light which nourishes the world. I was not always corn without juice; thirty years ago, *ahi*!—however, he shall make no mock of my house and name. I must think. To-morrow is the Christian holiday; there will be rest afield and solitude, perhaps. I will seek the *choor* who has thieved all from me, and laughed in the white beard of Goupaldoo Ranee."

When the illusive haze of a West Indian evening gathered all Trinidad in its embrace the next night, the Hindoo money-lender bade his daughter farewell.

"It may be three days that I am gone, but I will be with thee again ere thy black hair accustoms itself to thy new turban," he said, as he fastened more closely about him his snow-white garments.

"And whither dost thou go?" she asked, for she had been spoiled by much indulgence, and knew little of the passivity of her country-women.

"I go to Port-of-Spain again," he replied, "for brass pots and white scarfs. Wouldst thou have me bring thee a bauble of tortoise-shell? I would not come home to thee empty."

He kept his eyes turned from her, and she, with the fathom-

less gaze of the Hindoo riveted upon his face, said nothing, while he fumbled with his turban.



"There was once a man went out to buy," he said half aloud, "and tarried too long with his linen. What he sought was lost forever. If I go not, they will make a story of me for years."

"Never a trader went to Port-of-Spain with such a look in his eyes," thought Ulsee, as he left the house and walked rapidly away through the strange shadows of the uncouth vegetation. "Shall I not see whither thou goest, my father?"

She slipped out after him, following him easily

and without discovery, the great masses of frondage and the green twilight of the *lianes* affording instantaneous shelter, and among the thick woods it was already dark. At one spot where three roads came together, Goupaldoo paused. Finally he turned into one thickly wooded and radiant with clusters of stately jessamine and quaint candelabras of the *frangipani*. Nearly every color in the landscape was deepening in tint through the tremendous magnificence of the dying sun.

"O my father, that is not the road to Port-of-Spain," thought the girl who stole noiselessly after him. "Thou shouldest have taken the middle path."

Goupaldoo stopped at the entrance to a tiny cabin. When the last rays of light, which had penetrated the interior, were shut out by his presence in the doorway, Juggat Singh came forth. The girl crept behind a banana tree beside the hut.

"Hast thou come to ruin me to-night, Goupaldoo Ranee?" asked the young coolie proudly.

"Peace, son," replied the usurer, "wouldst thou make my god of rupees? When thou didst leave me yester-even I had already forgotten our foolish quarrel. It is not seemly for one

of my years and position to chaffer with one of thine. Thou wilt pay me as thou canst; thou hast honesty in thy heart, I am assured. I have come to ask thee a favor, Juggat Singh."

"Now this is fair talk," exclaimed the coolie, his face brightening. "I was wrong in that I mistrusted thee. What wouldst thou of me, Goupaldoo Rancee?"

"The dun cow, which carries a double burden, strayed from my meadow two nights gone," exclaimed the usurer. "Daolut Kangra told me she was on the pitch plateau. Being heavy, I feared she might wander into the soft flow and perish miserably. For that am I to come to thee to-night, my son. The dun is valuable and I would have thy assistance to bring her out of that devil's hole in safety."

"And thou wert to have brought scarfs, and pots and baubles in Port-of-Spain," thought the listening girl. "A lie is but the skin of evil. What evil is in thy heart, O my father?"

"But the night will be black," reasoned the coolie; "we must carry torches, and the path is uncertain."

"Nay, each inch of the way is like a scroll in my mind," answered Goupaldoo, "I have travelled it so often, thou hast but to step where I bid thee. Also I have to-day been through the bush and beheld my dun not far from the shore, where the guava bushes grow and the pitch is quite hard. The water there is drinkable, thou must know, and but slightly tinged. A lighted torch might startle her and cause her to move toward the middle. Were my frame as strong as thine, Juggat Singh, I would require no aid."

"Wouldst thou have me go with thee now?" questioned the young Hindoo.

"It is yet too light," objected the usurer; "thou dost not know the dun; she is like all woman-things, a vexation to the spirit. Once caught she enjoys capture, but it must be against her will. Thou shalt take of the three roads yonder, the one where the oleanders are thickest and the odor of sulphur most strong. I will await thee beyond the bush, where the pineapples are plentiful. Come when yon mountain is sable with gloom."

Goupaldoo glided noiselessly away into the thicket of tree-ferns, and the young man turned once more into the cool darkness of his cabin.

Ulsee gazed mesmerically downward, lost in the world of her own thoughts.

"He hath lied; the dun cow is safe at home; what is in his mind?" she speculated, as she wondered what was best to do.

When a velvety blackness enveloped the nearest mountain peak, she showed herself before the cabin. The coolie was about to leave it.

"O Juggat Singh," she cried, carelessly, as he started with some astonishment, "my father met the dun going home. Then he came upon me and I am to tell thee that thou needst not go to him to-night."

He nodded for answer, and though there was no excuse she would have lingered a moment, for his beauty was very great. All her heart was in her eyes as they dwelt upon him, but he did not look at her at all; he was deeply sensible of Goupaldoo's kindness; life seemed very bright then, and he was thinking of Murgah.



Ulsee glanced again at the mountain peak. The extreme tip was bathed in pearly light, but in the lowland where they stood it was rapidly becoming dark.

"Beware of my father," she said, hurriedly, as she left him; "farewell!" "Farewell," he echoed, staring after her in great wonder. Goupaldoo chewed some betel-nut powder reflectively as he awaited at the appointed tryst.

That which he had in his mind weighed upon it somewhat, but he was a Hindoo, and vengeance was sweeter than aught else. This young coolie had detected certain frauds in the old usurer's money practices and thrown them back in his face; he had called Goupaldoo a thief and a liar, and had refused to marry the Hindoo's daughter, a girl whom any coolie on the island would have been proud to wed.

Of all this Goupaldoo was thinking with irritation, as he stood waiting in the grotesque shadows, and the last gleams of daylight flickered and died out. A sound of wheels

aroused him, and by straining his eyes, he could discern a bullock cart laden with pitch jolting up from the lake.

"Is it thou, Goupaldoo Ranee?" asked the driver.

"May thy liver turn to water," thought the usurer, as he gave a surly affirmative. He did not like to be seen that night.

"I saw thy girl a while since, when I drove in," called back the man as he passed out.

Goupaldoo started with astonishment; could she be coming this way, she who believed him safe on his road to Port-of-Spain? Then he remembered that she knew but little of the lake and its vicinity; she was probably going to the village for some woman's fancy.

He had just reached this conclusion when a figure stood before him. He could see that it was a human figure and



that it moved, that was all, so intense is the darkness of the Trinidad nights and so defective the eyesight of Goupaldoo Ranee.

"At last thou art come, my son," exclaimed the usurer hurriedly; "thou art late and we must be off at once. I will go before thee, that thou shalt not step into one of those

devil's snares. Give me thy hand. Fire burn thee! how small it is!"

The hand which he held in his was indeed very tiny. Goupaldoo seemed not to notice that his companion did not speak. He talked eagerly himself, directing his comrade where to step and commenting on the peculiarities of the spot.

"Yonder, son," he exclaimed, as he spoke more rapidly and nervously than was his wont, "lie the bleached head and horns of an ox. They tell of death on this sticky surface."

His companion shuddered. With the quick wit of her sex she guessed now what his purpose was, and she realized that she would take the place of the man she loved in being her father's victim. Indulgent he had always been to her, but she felt that she had gone too far in tricking him to hope for mercy. The rage of the Hindoo is fierce and disregards all ties. Also she knew that it would be impossible to make her way back to the shore without help.

She came of a race, that for centuries, had been trained to mount in full life and health the funeral pyre of a dead husband. She had saved the life of the young coolie at the cost of her own, and she had put him on his guard.

Each wave of the asphalt lake had been at first like a solidified ripple, but the pitch over which they passed was becoming more plastic. Goupaldoo spoke but rarely now, and seemed to be making his way with great caution. A nauseous odor of petroleum and sulphuretted hydrogen was constant, and countless loathsome bubbles of gas arose, often accompanied by a rush of air and liquid mud.

Suddenly Goupaldoo dropped his companion's hand.

"The dun was here," he exclaimed; "I will go forward alone for a pace or two, that I may the better hear her if she move." A moment later and the trembling girl heard his clear tones far behind her, where the lake was like an asphalt pavement, hard and safe.

"Die, Juggat Singh!" cried the usurer, and the sound of his footsteps, as they fled shoreward, came faintly and more faintly to the ears of the girl who had now sunk ankle-deep. She struggled to extricate herself; one foot at last was free, and she reached forward to place it in safety. Then she bore her whole weight upon it while she endeavored to liberate the other. This time she sank to the knee, and the truth

that she was being slowly and horribly engulfed broke upon her with all its meaning.

"Father!" she cried once, twice, a dozen times with the agony of fear upon her, and the gray wild pines which grow upon the islands of this marvellous lake, and the white-winged night-jars which nest in them heard her, and perhaps the black swaying of the ferns ceased a moment and the tiny fish and beetles in the clear-water channels scurried away from the strange sound that broke the silence of the night.

When the first white flame of morning burned, the old Hindoo stood upon the shore and looked anxiously outward to where, last night, the shadows of the unknown had closed upon a human soul.

The ebullitions were going on with great activity, the surface where he had offered up his sacrifice bulged out in broken ridges. The famous black pool glared and glistened in the sun, and told no tale of what the darkness had seen.

"Ho, ho," chuckled Goupaldoo Ranee; "he will call me robber no more, and some one will console my Ulsee; there is no love so strong as hate!"



THE CAPTAIN'S STORY*

BY WILL LISENBEE

The voyage from Havana to New Orleans threatened to be a slow and tedious one. When only one day out, the *Jeannette* lay becalmed on the glassy surface of the sea, and little or no headway could be made. But, fortunately, there were few passengers aboard, and they were inclined to take matters philosophically, and instead of spending their time in fretting over what could not be remedied, they set about to enjoy the voyage in the best manner possible. Music, dancing by moonlight, and cards were indulged in, and there was not one aboard the *Jeannette* who did not enter with zest into the sports excepting the sickly passenger.

He was a man of some forty years, tall, slim and dark, with a pallor upon his thin face. He rarely left his berth, and seemed to care little for intercourse with his fellow-passengers. He had come aboard at Havana with a very beautiful girl of not more than seventeen, whose wondrous beauty and charming manners readily captivated all the male passengers on the *Jeannette*. It was soon learned that the young girl was the sick man's sister, instead of his daughter, as was at first supposed. Juanita Sanchez was Spanish in looks as well as name, and the dark skin and black eyes of her brother Anton gave indications of Spanish blood in his veins.

Among those impressed by the rare charms of the fair Juanita was Captain Judson, a retired sea-captain, who had taken passage aboard the *Jeannette*. He was a man of some thirty-six years, of pleasing address, and the marked attentions he paid to Juanita made it plain to all on board that he was deeply in love with the little Spanish beauty. Although, as before stated, Anton rarely left his cabin; not so with Juanita. She was the central figure in the gay crowd, and the rich sweet tones of her voice as she sang the quaint ballads of old Spain filled her hearers with rapture. With her looks and matchless voice, she might have won fame and fortune in the great cities.

But like some wild bird whose delicious melody trills and dies on the desert winds, she seemed all unconscious of her

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powers. Yet in spite of her careless and happy ways, there were times when she would grow strangely silent, while a look of sadness would settle on her lovely face. But what it was that occasioned those spells of melancholy was only a matter of conjecture. She never spoke of herself or alluded to her past history.

It was near the end of the voyage that the first of a succession of events occurred which served to throw some light upon the past life of the strange beauty and her invalid brother.

One night while the *Jeannette* lay becalmed, the captain and a little crowd of passengers were gathered on the moon-lit deck indulging in the pastime of story-telling. When, at last, Captain Judson was called upon to relate a story, he told the following:

"It was back in the seventies," he began, "and during the time of the great excitement over the South African diamond fields. I was but a stripling of eighteen then and was a sailor aboard the *Merry Gull*, plying between Southampton and Cape Town. We reached the Cape just at the time when the excitement over the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley was at its highest pitch. Of course the sailors aboard the *Merry Gull* had heard the marvelous stories of rich finds that were being made in the new fields, and nearly half the crew deserted the ship and fled to Kimberley.

"This left the *Merry Gull* without sufficient hands to sail her, and there she was compelled to lay at anchor till more sailors could be obtained. Joseph Danfield, an uncle of mine, was captain of the *Merry Gull*, and it had been through his solicitations that I had gone to sea. Now, like every one aboard, I became fired with the diamond fever and begged my uncle to be allowed to quit the ship and seek my fortune among the diamond mines. At first he would not hear to such a proposition, but by dint of much persuasion I at last prevailed upon him to give his consent; but before he did so, however, he exacted a promise from me that I would return to the Cape in three months' time. The next day I started for Kimberley.

"The railroad was only completed to Beaufort at that time, and the journey from that point—a matter of 600 miles—had to be made by stage or ox-cart. I chose the former, and after a weary journey that lasted over two weeks, I arrived in Kimberley.

"Of course there was no chance for a poor man to engage in diamond-mining at the dry diggings at that place, so, like all other poor prospectors who had come there to seek their fortune, I procured an outfit and went to the 'river diggings,' some eight miles from the town. I took me a claim, paid the amount of one pound rent exacted each month by the British government, and went to work.

"For the next month I worked as I had never worked before. From the time that the first streaks of day were visible in the morning till dark I toiled, hardly taking time to eat. My labor was only rewarded by the discovery of a few small diamonds, the sale of which barely sufficed to pay my expenses. By the middle of the second month, the ardor of my enthusiasm was much abated, and I began to realize that fortunes were not to be picked up every day, even in the richest diamond fields.

"As the days went by I now became more and more discouraged with my ill-luck, and finally made a vow that should I discover a diamond of any great value, to dispose of it and my claim at once and quit the diamond fields. Just three days later—as if to test the sincerity of my new determination—I found myself standing looking in amazement and joy at a large diamond which I had just picked up from a load of gravel taken from the stream. I stood looking at the precious stone in a vague, half-stupefied manner, hardly able to credit the evidence of my senses. Was it really a diamond? Yes, there could be no mistake—there was that peculiar 'soapy' feeling which characterizes all diamonds in the rough. How long I stood gazing at the precious bit of stone I can never tell. I soon found myself surrounded by an eager, excited crowd of miners, who almost fell over each other in their hasty efforts to get a look at the jewel. As soon as I had in a manner recovered from my surprise, I hurried to my cabin. Two hours later I had sold my claim for a thousand pounds and was on my way to Kimberley.

"The value of the diamond I carried with me was variously estimated by those who examined it from three thousand to five thousand pounds sterling, and as soon as I arrived in Kimberley I was besieged by a score of diamond-brokers and merchants who were desirous of purchasing the stone. The first offer I received was four thousand five hundred pounds, which was made by Terrill & Co., Bankers

and Diamond Merchants, of London. This bid was soon raised to five thousand pounds by a Paris company of diamond merchants. But I was in no hurry to sell, and was determined to give all buyers a chance to bid before accepting any offer.

"During the next few days there was some spirited bidding between the different diamond merchants, which resulted in Terrill & Co. outstripping them all by making the offer of seven thousand pounds. At this point the others retired, and I had about made up my mind to accept the offer of Terrill & Co. when another buyer appeared on the scene—a Mr. Pennington, of the firm of Pennington, Gray & Co., Bankers, of Dresden.

"Mr. Pennington came to my hotel very early in the morning, and after introducing himself and making his business known, he asked to see my diamond. He made a long and careful examination of it, and when he had finished he said abruptly:

" 'I will give you ten thousand pounds for the stone; this is every shilling it is worth, and this is the last and only offer I shall make.' Then he proceeded to unfold to me a most surprising piece of information. All the diamond merchants, excepting his own company, he said, had formed a kind of pool, and had agreed to pay only certain prices for diamonds, and though there would be an appearance of rivalry kept up between them, each would share alike in the profits of the diamonds purchased. In this way, he stated, they had been able to purchase diamonds to the amount of a half million for less than two-thirds of their actual value.

"He asked me to accompany him to his office, which had just been fitted up, a few blocks away, where he might confer with his partners. Highly elated at the good fortune my meeting with Mr. Pennington had brought, I accompanied him to his place of business at once. We entered his office, and passed through a door of ground-glass into a small apartment containing a safe, two desks, littered with papers, and other furniture necessary to a well-equipped office, where I was introduced to a Mr. Bright, a man with a black bushy beard, who was sitting at one of the desks. As soon as I had been introduced to the stranger, Pennington stated that I had a very valuable diamond to dispose of, and asked where Mr. Dicks was. Bright, who was evidently a clerk, replied that that gentleman had just gone out.

"Meantime Pennington had taken the diamond, and was examining it by the aid of a powerful magnifying glass. After scrutinizing it closely for some time, he laid it on the desk, when it was taken up by Bright, who also began to examine it. Crossing the room, Pennington opened a cabinet, and displayed several large specimens of garnet and amethyst, which he invited me to examine. I was occupied several minutes in looking over the stones, and when at last I turned from the cabinet, I discovered that Bright had disappeared, taking the diamond with him. A sudden feeling of suspicion and alarm swept over me. I cast a quick, questioning glance at Pennington.

" 'Why, what has become of Bright?' he said, in a brisk, nervous tone. He stepped hastily to a door leading into another apartment as he spoke. I followed close at his heels, but on glancing into the room, I perceived that it was empty.

" 'Will you explain what this means?' I said, confronting Pennington.

" 'Why, devil take the fellow, what can he mean by playing such a trick!' he cried. 'Surely, he would not dare attempt to make off with your diamond!'

" A dreadful suspicion of the truth that I was the victim of swindlers came over me. I grasped the man roughly by the collar.

" 'Look here!' I said, fiercely. 'If this is a trick of yours, your life will pay the forfeit!'

" He threw me off with a quick movement, and drew a pistol as he did so.

" 'You had better go slow, my fine fellow,' he said, coolly. 'This man Bright was only an employ   in the office, and it will avail you nothing to attempt to implicate me in this affair. He may return in a few moments, and if not we'll call the police and put them on his track.'

" As he ceased speaking he stepped quickly into the next room and closed the door and locked it. I threw my whole weight against it, but it would not yield. With the sudden, sickening sensation that I had been duped, robbed, I turned hastily and ran through a narrow passage toward the front door. As I did so, I perceived a blonde wig and false whiskers lying in a corner, and in an instant I recognized them as having been worn by the man Bright. There was no

longer any doubt now in my mind that I had been robbed of my diamond. I reached the front door to find it locked. I now ran back to the office, and fetching a chair, I dashed it through the glass front and stepped into the street.

"Calling a policeman I stated what had occurred, but a search of the premises failed to discover either of the swindlers, nor could any trace of them be found in the city. Nothing was known of them save that they had rented rooms formerly occupied by a broker, leasing the furniture as well, so when they disappeared they left nothing belonging to them behind.

"To cut a long story short, I never again saw either of the swindlers, as far as I know, nor my diamond. Some weeks later I returned to the Cape, where I found the *Merry Gull* still at anchor, and I was content to accept my old berth and return to the river a great deal wiser, and richer, I might add, by nearly five thousand dollars. Yet the thought of how I was duped out of a fortune, is to this day a source of the most vexing and unpleasant reflections."

Then ended the captain's story.

Among those who had listened with breathless interest to the story was Anton Sanchez. He sat as if spell-bound till the story was finished, then arose hastily and entered his stateroom. The next day he did not appear on deck, and in the afternoon he sent a message to Captain Judson, asking an interview. The captain found the sick man looking very pale, and apparently greatly agitated. He motioned Judson to a seat and for some time he said nothing. At last he broke the silence.

"Captain," he said in a weak voice, "it is well known to me that my days on earth are numbered. But before I go I have a confession to make, and a secret of great importance to reveal."

He paused here while a look of curious surprise came over the captain's face.

"I will confess that my life has not been as it should have been," went on the sick man slowly; "but it is my purpose to make amends for some of the crimes I have committed, as far as it is in my power to do so. But above all it is my desire that the secret of my ill-doing may never be revealed to my beloved sister Juanita. She has never suspected that I ever led anything but an honest and blameless life, and should

the knowledge which I am now about to impart reach her ears, she would die of a broken heart. Before I go further, promise me that you will keep my secret from her."

"I promise," said the captain, the look of surprise still upon his face.

"Several years ago," continued the sick man, "I was connected with a band of diamond swindlers in South Africa; I was then known by the name of Bright; and through the aid of my associate, Pennington, you were swindled out of a diamond worth a small fortune!"

"What!—you—you the one who did that?" cried the captain, starting from his chair.

"Yes," continued Anton, "I am the man. But you were not the only one we swindled, though the diamond we obtained from you was by far the most valuable that came into our possession. We knew that owing to its great size it would be dangerous to handle, so when we returned to London we had it cut in two pieces. One I still have in my possession, the other was taken by Pennington. I had my part of the diamond cut, but somehow I have never had the courage to offer it for sale, though I might have disposed of it for twenty thousand dollars long ago. I am now thankful that I have kept it, for I now have a chance of returning it to its rightful owner."

He drew a small case from beneath his pillow and opened it, displaying a most brilliant and beautiful stone lying within the plush-lined box.

An exclamation of amazement came from the lips of the captain.

"Keep it, it is yours," went on Anton; "and God forbid that I should ever again be guilty of the crime of taking that which does not belong to me."

"This is a noble and worthy act," said the captain, visibly affected as he clasped the sick man's hand, "and may you be spared to live a long and useful life."

"Ah, but that can never be. Only a few months—perhaps weeks—and I shall be no more. I am a poor man with poverty, and even want, staring me in the face; but I feel that this punishment is what I deserved, yet—God knows it is hard to bear when I reflect that my misery and privation must be shared by my devoted sister, Juanita. Almost the last dollar I had was the five hundred I paid to have the

diamond cut which I stole from you. I ought not to ask you to repay this amount to me, but it is not for my own sake——”

“I should be worse than ungrateful if I did not willingly repay you what you have paid out on the stone,” broke in the captain, hastily drawing a roll of bills from his pocket and thrusting them into the sick man’s hand.

“May heaven bless you for your kindness and generosity,” said Anton, with emotion, turning his face upon the pillow.

As the captain left the stateroom, a few moments later, he met Juanita. Although there was a look of sadness upon her face, a swift coloring rose to her cheeks as the eyes of the two met; and if what passed between the two as they stood there together could have been witnessed by the other passengers aboard the *Jeannette*, they would have had additional reason for suspecting that the two were the most devoted lovers.

The next day when the *Jeannette* reached her destination and the passengers were taking leave of each other, Captain Judson and Juanita stood apart from the rest, conversing in low tones. Then as Anton and his sister entered a carriage, to be driven to their hotel, they united in giving the Captain a pressing invitation to call on them at his earliest pleasure.

Captain Judson was seized with a sudden illness that evening which kept him confined to his room till the evening of the following day. It was about dusk when Colonel Harper, a man whose acquaintance Captain Judson had made during the voyage, came into the room to inquire after the Captain’s health.

He found Judson quite recovered and sitting by the window, calmly smoking a cigar, an open letter which he had just received in his hand.

“Glad to see you; be seated and take a cigar,” said the Captain, cordially.

Harper then threw himself into an easy chair, took a cigar from the extended case, and lit it.

“By the way, Captain,” he said, after a pause, “that was quite a romantic incident—that little affair of yours with the sick passenger and his charming sister.”

The Captain nodded, but remained silent.

“It was quite accidental that the particulars of the affair came to my hearing,” went on the Colonel. “It happened

that the stateroom of a Mrs. Quigley, who was a passenger on the *Jeannette*, adjoined the one occupied by Anton Sanchez, and by the merest accident she overheard the interview between yourself and the sick passenger. By my soul! that was a most surprising and romantic sequel to the story you told about the lost diamond."

"So it was," affirmed the Captain with a nod.

"But, after all, it may be spoiled," pursued the Colonel.

"I have just learned that the sick passenger and his beautiful sister left the city on the very night of their arrival, and it is rumored that the two were not just what they represented themselves to be. It looks rather suspicious, to say the least, in view of the fact that the two departed in a very secret and unexpected manner. Are you sure that the diamond you received from the repentant swindler is not bogus after all?"

"I have had the stone examined by an expert in such matters," returned the Captain, "and it proves to be a very clever imitation of a diamond."

"The devil!" gasped the Colonel.

"Yes," went on the Captain, "and I have just received a letter from the sick passenger, written since his sudden departure, which will throw still greater light upon the affair." As he spoke he handed the letter he held in his hand to the Colonel, who took it and read as follows:

"ON THE ROAD —, Sept. 14, 18—

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN JUDSON: The suddenness of my departure precluded my bidding you a formal good-bye. However, I now do so, and at the same time assure you of my lasting gratitude for the little services rendered me during our pleasant voyage on the *Jeannette*. I also wish to offer you my sincere thanks for the kind attentions and marked regard with which you favored my *wife*, whom my baseness had led you to believe was my sister. The five hundred dollars which your kindness of heart and generosity induced you to place in my possession for the bogus diamond, which in the foulness of *my* heart I had made you believe was the one you had lost some years ago, will go far toward compensating me for any feeling of self-reproach I may suffer for having imposed upon your credulity. It is hardly necessary to say that I have so laid my plans regarding the route I shall travel that it will be utterly useless for

you to attempt to discover my whereabouts. It may be that I am running some risk in writing this, yet when I remember your kindness to me and mine, I feel that it would be almost brutal in me to leave without some expression of the warm regard I hold for you and the regret I feel in thus abruptly ending our brief but most pleasant acquaintance.

"ANTON SANCHEZ, (ALIAS MR. BRIGHT)."

Colonel Harper let the letter drop from his hand.

"Why, the impudent rascal!" he cried with vehemence. "How could he dare act in such a high-handed manner. But by George! Captain; that spoils what might have been a very pretty and affecting romance."

The Captain nodded gravely.

"This is a hard, cruel world," he said, "and people are not always just what they seem, but after all I cannot help feeling a touch of pity for that scoundrel Anton and his beautiful sister."

The Colonel cast a questioning look at his companion.

"You see," went on the Captain, "it's like this—Anton Sanchez and his wife are at the head of an organized band of bogus diamond swindlers, and a large reward is offered for their apprehension. I have been on their trail for six months, but they have managed to escape me till I found them aboard the *Jeannette*. I don't mind telling you now, that instead of being merely a retired sea-captain I am a detective. I would have placed Anton and his wife under arrest as soon as we landed, but there were two other members of the gang that we wished to get at the same time; so I detailed two of my most trusted assistants to shadow the two till they should reach St. Louis, which was done, and a despatch which I just received informs me that they have been arrested along with two others of the gang and safely locked in jail. The money I gave to Anton was all in marked bills, and was found in his possession, so it will be returned to me as soon as I reach St. Louis, where I shall soon go to testify against the guilty parties."

A cry of amazement escaped the lips of Colonel Harper.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "this is a most amazing dénouement to the little affair. But how about the story you told of your lost diamond?"

"Oh, that was simply a bit of imagination—a little bait which I threw out, and as luck would have it, it was gobbled up at once. Here—take a fresh cigar, Colonel."

A FOREST BETROTHAL*

BY ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN

One day in the month of June, 1845, Master Zacharias' fishing-basket was so full of salmon-trout, about three o'clock in the afternoon, that the good man was loath to take any more; for, as Pathfinder says: "We must leave some for to-morrow!" After having washed his in a stream and carefully covered them with field-sorrel and rowell, to keep them fresh; after having wound up his line and bathed his hands and face; a sense of drowsiness tempted him to take a nap in the heather. The heat was so excessive that he preferred to wait until the shadows lengthened before re-climbing the steep ascent of Bigelberg.

Breaking his crust of bread and wetting his lips with a draught of Rikevir, he climbed down fifteen or twenty steps from the path and stretched himself on the moss-covered ground, under the shade of the pine-trees; his eyelids heavy with sleep.

A thousand animate creatures had lived their long life of an hour, when the judge was wakened by the whistle of a bird, which sounded strange to him. He sat up to look around, and judge his surprise; the so-called bird was a young girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age; fresh, with rosy cheeks and vermilion lips, brown hair, which hung in two long tresses behind her. A short poppy-colored skirt, with a tightly-laced bodice, completed her costume. She was a young peasant, who was rapidly descending the sandy path down the side of Bigelberg, a basket poised on her head, and her arms a little sunburned, but plump, were gracefully resting on her hips.

"Oh, what a charming bird; but she whistles well and her pretty chin, round like a peach, is sweet to look upon."

Mr. Zacharias was all emotion—a rush of hot blood, which made his heart beat, as it did at twenty, coursed through his veins. Blushing, he arose to his feet.

"Good-day, my pretty one!" he said.

*Translated from the French, by Belle M. Sherman, for Short Stories
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The young girl stopped short—opened her big eyes and recognized him (for who did not know the dear old Judge Zacharias in that part of the country?).

"Ah!" she said, with a bright smile, "it is Mr. Zacharias Seiler!"

The old man approached her—he tried to speak—but all he could do was to stammer a few unintelligible words, just like a very young man—his embarrassment was so great that he completely disconcerted the young girl. At last he managed to say:

"Where are you going through the forest at this hour, my dear child?"

She stretched out her hand and showed him, way at the end of the valley, a forester's house.

"I am returning to my father's house, the Corporal Yeri Foerster. You know him, without doubt, Monsieur le Juge."

"What, are you our brave Yeri's daughter? Ah, do I know him? A very worthy man. Then you are little Charlotte of whom he has often spoken to me when he came with his official reports?"

"Yes, Monsieur; I have just come from the town and am returning home."

"That is a very pretty bunch of Alpine berries you have," exclaimed the old man.

She detached the bouquet from her belt and tendered it to him.

"If it would please you, Monsieur Seiler."

Zacharias was touched.

"Yes, indeed," he said, "I will accept it, and I will accompany you home. I am anxious to see this brave Foerster again. He must be getting old by now."

"He is about your age, Monsieur le Juge," said Charlotte innocently, "between fifty-five and sixty years of age."

This simple speech recalled the good man to his senses, and as he walked beside her he became pensive.

What was he thinking of? Nobody could tell; but how many times, how many times has it happened that a brave and worthy man, thinking that he had fulfilled all his duties, finds that he has neglected the greatest, the most sacred, the most beautiful of all—that of love. And what it costs him to think of it when it is too late.

Soon Mr. Zacharias and Charlotte came to the turn of

the valley where the path spanned a little pond by means of a rustic bridge, and led straight to the corporal's house. They could now see Yeri Foerster, his large felt hat decorated with a twig of heather, his calm eyes, his brown cheeks and grayish hair, seated on the stone bench near his doorway; two beautiful hunting dogs, with reddish-brown coats, lay at his feet, and the high vine arbor behind him rose to the peak of the gable roof.

The shadows on Romelstein were lengthening and the setting sun spread its purple fringe behind the high fir-trees on Alpnach.

The old corporal, whose eyes were as piercing as an eagle's, recognized Monsieur Zacharias and his daughter from afar. He came toward them, lifting his felt hat respectfully.

"Welcome, Monsieur le Juge," he said in the frank and cordial voice of a mountaineer; "what happy circumstance has procured me the honor of a visit?"

"Master Yeri," replied the good man, "I am belated in your mountains. Have you a vacant corner at your table and a bed at the disposition of a friend?"

"Ah!" cried the Corporal, "if there were but one bed in the house, should it not be at the service of the best, the most honored of our ex-magistrates of Stantz? Monsieur Seiler, what an honor you confer on Yeri Foerster's humble home."

"Christine, Christine! Monsieur le Juge Zacharias Seiler wishes to sleep under our roof to-night."

Then a little old woman, her face wrinkled like a vine leaf, but still fresh and laughing, her head crowned by a cap with wide black ribbons, appeared on the threshold and disappeared again, murmuring:

"What? Is it possible? Monsieur le Juge!"

"My good people," said Mr. Zacharias, "truly you do me too much honor—I hope——."

"Monsieur le Juge, if you forget the favors you have done to others, they remember them."

Charlotte placed her basket on the table, feeling very proud at having been the means of bringing so distinguished a visitor to the house. She took out the sugar, the coffee and all the little odds and ends of household provisions which she had purchased in the town. And Zacharias, gazing at

her pretty profile, felt himself agitated once more, his poor old heart beat more quickly in his bosom and seemed to say to him: "This is love, Zacharias! This is love! This is love!"

To tell you the truth, my dear friends, Mr. Seiler spent the evening with the Head Forester, Yeri Foerster, perfectly oblivious to the fact of Therèse's uneasiness, to his promise to return before seven o'clock, to all his old habits of order and submission.

Picture to yourself the large room, the time-browned rafters of the ceiling, the windows opened on the silent valley, the round table in the middle of the room, covered with a white cloth, with red stripes running through it; the light from the lamp, bringing out more clearly the grave faces of Zacharias and Yeri, the rosy, laughing features of Charlotte, and Dame Christine's little cap, with long fluttering streamers. Picture to yourself the soup-tureen, with gayly-flowered bowl, from which arose an appetising odor, the dish of trout garnished with parsley, the plates filled with fruits and little meal cakes as yellow as gold —; then worthy Father Zacharias, handing first one and then the other of the plates of fruit and cakes to Charlotte, who lowered her eyes, frightened at the old man's compliments and tender speeches.

Yeri was quite puffed up at his praise, but Dame Christine said: "Ah, Monsieur le Juge! You are too good. You do not know how much trouble this little girl gives us, or how headstrong she is when she wants anything. You will spoil her with so many compliments."

To which speech Mr Zacharias made reply:

"Dame Christine, you possess a treasure! Mademoiselle Charlotte merits all the good I have said of her."

Then Master Yeri, raising his glass, cried out:

"Let us drink to the health of our good and venerated Judge Zacharias Seiler!"

The toast was drunk with a will.

Just then the clock, in its hoarse voice, struck the hour of eleven. Out of doors there was the great silence of the forest, the grasshopper's last cry, the vague murmur of the river. As the hour sounded, they rose, preparatory to retiring. How fresh and agile he felt! With what ardor, had he dared, would he not have pressed a kiss upon Charlotte's

little hand! Oh, but he must not think of that now! Later on, perhaps!

"Come, Master Yeri," he said, "it is bedtime. Good-night, and many thanks for your hospitality."

"At what hour do you wish to rise, Monsieur?" asked Christine.

"Oh!" he replied gazing at Charlotte, "I am an early bird. I do not feel my age, though perhaps you might not think so. I rise at five o'clock."

"Like me, Monsieur Seiler," cried the Head Forester. I rise before daybreak; but I must confess it is tiresome all the same—we are no longer young. Ha! Ha!"

"Bah! I have never had anything ail me, Master Forester; I have never been more vigorous or more nimble."

And suiting his actions to his words, he ran briskly up the steep steps of the staircase. Really Mr. Zacharias was no more than twenty; but his twenty years lasted about twenty minutes, and once nestled in the large canopied bed, with the covers drawn up to his chin and his handkerchief tied around his head, in lieu of a nightcap, he said to himself:

"Sleep Zacharias! Sleep! You have great need of rest; you are very tired."

And the good man slept until nine o'clock. The forester returning from his rounds, uneasy at his non-appearance, went up to his room and wished him good-morning. Then seeing the sun high in the heavens, hearing the birds warbling in the foliage, the Judge, ashamed of his boastfulness of the previous night, arose, alleging as an excuse for his prolonged slumbers, the fatigue of fishing and the length of the supper of the evening before.

"Ah, Monsieur Zeiler," said the forester, "it is perfectly natural; I would love dearly myself to sleep in the mornings, but I must always be on the go. What I want is a son-in-law, a strong youth to replace me; I would voluntarily give him my gun and my hunting pouch."

Zacharias could not restrain a feeling of great uneasiness at these words. Being dressed, he descended in silence. Christine was waiting with his breakfast; Charlotte had gone to the hay field.

The breakfast was short, and Mr. Zeiler having thanked these good people for their hospitality, turned his face toward Stantz; he became pensive, as he thought of the

worry to which Mademoiselle Therèse had been subjected; yet he was not able to tear his hopes from his heart, nor the thousand charming illusions, which came to him like a late-comer in a nest of warblers.

By Autumn he had fallen so into the habit of going to the forester's house that he was oftener there than at his own; and the Head Forester, not knowing to what love of fishing to attribute these visits, often found himself embarrassed at being obliged to refuse the multiplicity of presents which the worthy ex-magistrate (he himself being very much at home) begged of him to accept in compensation for his daily hospitality.

Besides, Mr. Zeiler wished to share all his occupations, following him in his rounds in the Grindewald and Entilbach.

Yeri Foerster often shook his head, saying: "I never knew a more honest or better judge than Mr. Zacharias Seiler. When I used to bring my reports to him, formerly, he always praised me, and it is to him that I owe my raise to the rank of Head Forester. "But," he added to his wife, "I am afraid the poor man is a little out of his head. Did he not help Charlotte in the hay field, to the infinite enjoyment of the peasants? Truly, Christine, it is not right; but then I dare not say so to him, he is so much above us. Now he wants me to accept a pension—and such a pension—one hundred florins a month. And that silk dress he gave Charlotte on her birthday. Do young girls wear silk dresses in our valley? Is a silk dress the thing for a forester's daughter?"

"Leave him alone," said his wife. "He is contented with a little milk and meal. He likes to be with us; it is a change from his lonesome city life, with no one to talk to but his old governess; whilst here the little one looks after him. He likes to talk to her. Who knows but he may end by adopting her and leave her something in his will?"

The Head Forester, not knowing what to say, shrugged his shoulders; his good judgment told him there was some mystery, but he never dreamed of suspecting the good man's whole folly.

One fine morning a wagon slowly wended its way down the sides of Bigelberg loaded with three casks of old Rikevir wine. Of all the presents that could be given to him this was the most acceptable, for Yeri Foerster loved, above everything else, a good glass of wine.

"That warms one up," he would say, laughing. And when he had tasted this wine he could not help saying:

"Mr. Zacharias is really the best man in the world. Has he not filled my cellar for me? Charlotte, go and gather the prettiest flowers in the garden; cut all the roses and the jasmine, make them into a bouquet, and when he comes you will present them to him yourself. Charlotte! Charlotte! Hurry up, here he comes with his long pole."

At this moment the old man appeared descending the hillside in the shade of the pines with a brisk step.

As far off as Yeri could make himself heard, he called out, his glass in his hand:

"Here is to the best man I know! Here is to our benefactor."

And Zacharias smiled. Dame Christine had already commenced preparations for dinner; a rabbit was turning at the spit and the savory odor of the soup whetted Mr. Seiler's appetite.

The old Judge's eyes brightened when he saw Charlotte in her short poppy-colored skirt, her arms bare to the elbow, running here and there in the garden paths gathering the flowers, and when he saw her approaching him with her huge bouquet, which she humbly presented to him with downcast eyes.

"Monsieur le Juge, will you deign to accept this bouquet from your little friend Charlotte?"

A sudden blush overspread his venerable cheeks, and as she stooped to kiss his hand, he said:

"No, no, my dear child; accept rather from your old friend, your best friend, a more tender embrace."

He kissed both her burning cheeks. The Head Forester laughing heartily, cried out:

"Monsieur Seiler, come and sit down under the acacia tree and drink some of your own wine. Ah, my wife is right when she calls you our benefactor."

Mr. Zacharias seated himself at the little round table, placing his pole behind him; Charlotte sat facing him, Yeri Foerster was on his right; then dinner was served and Mr. Seiler started to speak of his plans for the future.

He was wealthy and had inherited a fine fortune from his parents. He wished to buy some few hundred acres of forest land in the valley, and build in the midst a forester's

lodge. "We would always be together," he said turning to Yeri Foerster, "sometimes you at my house, sometimes I at yours "

Christine gave her advice, and they chatted, planning now one thing, then another. Charlotte seemed perfectly contented, and Zacharias imagined that these simple people understood him.

Thus the time passed, and when night had fallen and they had had a surfeit of Rikevir, of rabbit and of Dame Christine's "koechten" sprinkled with cinnamon, Mr. Seiler, happy and contented, full of joyous hope, ascended to his room, putting off until to-morrow his declaration, not doubting for a moment but that it would be accepted.

About this time of the year the mountaineers from Harberg, Kusnacht and the surrounding hamlets descend from their mountains about one o'clock in the morning and commence to mow the high grass in the valleys. One can hear their monotonous songs in the middle of the night keeping time to the circular movement of the scythes, the jingle of the cattle bells, and the young men and girls' voices laughing afar in the silence of the night. It is a strange harmony, especially when the night is clear and there is a bright moon, and the heavy dew falling makes a pitter-patter on the leaves of the great forest trees.

Mr. Zacharias heard nothing of all this, for he was sleeping soundly; but the noise of a handful of peas being thrown against the window waked him suddenly. He listened and heard outside at the bottom of the wall, a "scit! scit!" so softly whispered that you might almost think it the cry of some bird. Nevertheless, the good man's heart fluttered.

"What is that?" he cried.

After a few seconds silence a soft voice replied:

"Charlotte, Charlotte—It is I!"

Zacharias trembled; and as he listened with ears on the alert for each sound, the foliage on the trellis struck against the window and a figure climbed up quietly—oh so quietly—then stopped and stared into the room.

The old man being indignant at this, rose and opened the window, upon which the stranger climbed through noiselessly.

"Do not be frightened, Charlotte," he said, "I have come to tell you some good news. My father will be here to-morrow.

He received no response, for the reason that Zacharias was trying to light the lamp.

"Where are you, Charlotte?"

"Here I am," cried the old man turning with a livid face and gazing fiercely at his rival.

The young man who stood before him was tall and slender, with large, frank, black eyes, brown cheeks, rosy lips, just covered with a little moustache, and a large brown, felt hat, tilted a little to one side.

The apparition of Zacharias stunned him to immovability. But as the Judge was about to cry out, he exclaimed:

"In the name of Heaven, do not call. I am no robber—I love Charlotte!"

"And—she—she?" stammered Zacharias.

"She loves me also! Oh, you need have no fear if you are one of her relations. We were betrothed at the Kusnacht feast. The fiancés of the Grinderwald and the Entilbach have the right to visit in the night. It is a custom of Unterwald. All the Swiss know that."

"Yeri Foerster—Yeri, Charlotte's father, never told me."

"No, he does not know of our betrothal yet," said the other, in a lower tone of voice; "when I asked his permission last year he told me to wait—that his daughter was too young yet—we were betrothed secretly. Only as I had not the Forester's consent, I did not come in the night-time. This is the first time. I saw Charlotte in the town; but the time seemed so long to us both that I ended by confessing all to my father, and he has promised to see Yeri tomorrow. Ah, Monsieur, I knew it would give such pleasure to Charlotte that I could not help coming to announce my good news."

The poor old man fell back in his chair and covered his face with his hands. Oh, how he suffered! What bitter thoughts passed through his brain; what a sad awakening after so many sweet and joyous dreams.

And the young mountaineer was not a whit more comfortable, as he stood leaning against a corner of the wall, his arms crossed over his breast, and the following thoughts running through his head:

"If old Foerster, who does not know of our betrothal, finds me here, he will kill me without listening to one word of explanation. That is certain."

And he gazed anxiously at the door, his ear on the alert for the least sound.

A few moments afterward, Zacharias lifting his head, as though awakening from a dream, asked him:

"What is your name?"

"Karl Imnant, Monsieur."

"What is your business?"

"My father hopes to obtain the position of a forester in the Grinderwald for me."

There was a long silence and Zacharias looked at the young man with an envious eye.

"And she loves you?" he asked in a broken voice.

"Oh, yes, Monsieur; we love each other devotedly."

And Zacharias, letting his eyes fall on his thin legs and his hands wrinkled and veined, murmured:

"Yes, she ought to love him; he is young and handsome."

And his head fell on his breast again. All at once he arose, trembling in every limb, and opened the window.

"Young man, you have done very wrong; you will never know how much wrong you have really done. You must obtain Mr. Foerster's consent—but go—go—you will hear from me soon."

The young mountaineer did not wait for a second invitation; with one bound he jumped to the path below and disappeared behind the grand old trees.

"Poor, poor Zacharias," the old Judge murmured, "all your illusions are fled."

At seven o'clock, having regained his usual calmness of demeanor, he descended to the room below, where Charlotte, Dame Christine and Yeri were already waiting breakfast for him. The old man turning his eyes from the young girl, advanced to the Head Forester, saying:

"My friend, I have a favor to ask of you. You know the son of the forester of the Grinderwald, do you not?"

"Karl Imnant, why yes sir!"

"He is a worthy young man, and well behaved, I believe."

"I think so, Monsieur."

"Is he capable of succeeding his father?"

"Yes, he is twenty-one years old; he knows all about tree-clipping, which is the most necessary thing of all—he knows how to read and how to write; but that is not all; he must have influence."

"Well Master Yeri, I still have some influence in the Department of Forests and Rivers. This day fortnight, or three weeks at the latest, Karl Imnant shall be Assistant Forester of the Grinderwald, and I ask the hand of your daughter Charlotte for this brave young man."

At this request, Charlotte who had blushed and trembled with fear, uttered a cry and fell back into her mother's arms.

Her father looking at her severely, said: "What is the matter, Charlotte? Do you refuse?"

"Oh, no, no, father—no!"

"That is as it should be! As for myself, I should never have refused any request of Mr. Zacharias Seiler's! Come here and embrace your benefactor."

Charlotte ran toward him and the old man pressed her to his heart, gazing long and earnestly at her, with eyes filled with tears. Then pleading business he started home, with only a crust of bread in his basket for breakfast.

Fifteen days afterward, Karl Imnant received the appointment of forester, taking his father's place. Eight days later, he and Charlotte were married.

The guests drank the rich Rikevir wine, so highly esteemed by Yeri Foerster, and which seemed to him to have arrived so opportunely for the feast.

Mr. Zacharias Seiler was not present that day at the wedding, being ill at home. Since then he rarely goes fishing—and then, always to the Brünnen—toward the lake—on the other side of the mountain.



ETCHING: THE IMAGE*

BY L. CLEVELAND

An image has been sent to the convent. The Superior has given orders that Sister Félice shall unwrap it and place it in the chapel. The Count Bréda di Taglione has graciously bestowed it upon the Order, with a good roll of *louis d'ors* and a smile at the wicket-gate. The image is large, and must be unwrapped in the convent garden. Sister Félice is on her knees before the huge box, which the old porter has rolled down the garden path with a kick and a grumble and a "*Ti viene un po di bene!*" glancing at the dark figure among the golden bloom of the orange-trees. The fruit hangs in rich clusters, like huge globed giant wedding-rings. The little banksia roses blush deep, and the nightingales sing.

Now the wrappers are unbound. Sister Félice will carry the image into the chapel, and take off the last covering at the altar rail, lest any speck of dust or a mote in the sun-beam should cloud the figure.

The chapel is in a golden radiance from the high emblazoned windows of yellow glass. The light is deep and burning, like the bloom of the wedding-circlets on the orange-trees. There is a breath of incense lingering, for mass was to-day. The nightingales are shaking the pulses of the sun-beams with their full love-heart of song.

Sister Félice kneels before the altar rail. Slowly and with much devotion she has drawn off the last wrapper around the tall image. It is a knight in complete panoply of mail.

But why does the Sister Félice shiver so suddenly and bow down, like the reeds in the garden stream under a tempest of tears, until the iron heart rests upon her own?

The sharp voice of the Superior is at her elbow: "Sister Félice, what makes you so long putting the image of St. George in its proper place?"

*Written for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

THE SILHOUETTES*

BY A. T. QUILLER-COUCH

The small round gentleman who had come all the way to Gantick village from the extreme south of France, and had blown his flageolet all day in Gantick street without exciting its population in the least, was disgusted. Toward dusk he crossed the stile which divides Sanctuary Lane from the churchyard and pausing, with a leg on each side of the bar, shook his fist back at the village, which lay below, its gray roofs and red chimneys just distinguishable here and there, between a foamy sea of apple-blossom and a haze of bluish smoke. He could not very well shake its dust off his feet, for this was hardly separable from the dust of many other places on his boots, and also it was mostly mud. But his gesture betokened extreme malevolence.

"These Cor-rnishmen," he said, "are pigs all. There is not a Cor-rnishman that is not a big pig."

He lifted the second leg wearily over the bar.

"As for Art—phit! Moreover, they shut up their churches."

This was really a serious matter for he had not a penny-piece in his pocket, the last had gone to buy a loaf—and there was no lodging to be had in the village. The month was April, a bad time to sleep in the open; and though the night drew in tranquilly upon a day of broad sunshine, the earth had by no means sucked in the late heavy rains. The church-porch, however, had a broad bench on either side and faced the south, away from the prevailing wind. He had made a mental note of this early in the day, being schooled to anticipate such straits as the present. As he passed up the narrow path between the graves, with a gait like a limping hare's, he scanned his surroundings carefully.

The churchyard was narrow and surrounded by a high gray wall, mostly hidden by an inner belt of well-grown cypresses. At one point the ranks of these trees were

*Selected from "The Speaker."

broken for some forty feet, and here the back of a small dwelling-house abutted on the cemetery. There was one window only in the yellow-washed wall, and this window looked straight on the church-porch. The flageolet-player regarded it with suspicion; but the casement was shut and the blind drawn down. The aspect of the cottage, too, proclaimed that its inhabitants were very poor folk—not at all the sort to tell tales upon a casual tramp if they spied him bivouacking upon holy ground.

He limped into the porch and cast off the blue bag that was strapped upon his shoulders. Out of it he drew a sheep's-wool cape, worn very thin, and then turned the bag inside out, on the chance of discovering a forgotten crust. The search disappointed him, but he took it calmly—being on the whole a sweet-tempered man and not easily angered, except by an affront to his vanity. His violent indignation against the people of Gantick arose from their indifference to his playing. Had they even run out at their doors to listen and stare, he would not have minded their stinginess.

He that cannot eat had best sleep. The little man passed the flat of his hand, in the dusky light, over the two benches, and having chosen the one with fewest asperities on its surface, tossed his bag and flageolet upon the other, pulled off his boots, folded his cape to make a pillow, and stretched himself at length. In less than ten minutes he was sleeping dreamlessly.

Over his head there hung a board containing a list or two of the parish ratepayers, and the usual notice of the spring training of the Royal Cornwall Rangers' militia. This last placard had broken from two of its fastenings, and, toward midnight was rustled by an eddy of the light wind so loudly as to wake the sleeper.

He sat upright and lowered his bare feet upon the pavement. Outside, the blue firmament was full of stars, sparkling unevenly, as though the wind was trying in sport to extinguish them. In the eaves of the porch he could hear the martins rustling in the crevices that they had come back, but a few days since, to warm again. But what drew the man to the entrance was the window in the cottage over the wall.

The lattice was pushed back and the room inside was brightly lit. But a white sheet had been stretched right

across the window between him and the lamp. And on this sheet two quick hands were waving all kinds of clever shadows, shaping them, moving them and reshaping them with the speed of lightning.

It was certainly a remarkable performance. The shadows took the form of rabbits, swans, foxes, elephants, fairies, sailors with wooden legs, old women who smoked pipes, ballet-girls who pirouetted, twirling harlequins and the profiles of eminent statesmen—and all made with two hands and, at the most, the help of a tiny stick or piece of string. They danced and capered, grew large and then small, with such odd turns and changes that the flageolet-player could hardly hold his laughter. He remarked that the hands, whenever they were disentwined for a moment, appeared to be very small and plump.

After about ten minutes the display ceased and the shadow of a woman's head and neck crossed the sheet, which was presently drawn back at one corner.

"Is that any better?" asked a woman's voice, low but distinct.

The flageolet-player started and bent his eyes lower across the graves and into the shadow beneath the window. For the first time he grew aware that a figure stood there, a little way out from the wall. As well as he could see, it was a young boy.

"That was beautiful, mother. You can't think how you've improved at it this week."

"Any mistakes?"

"The harlequin and columbine seemed a little stiff; but that's the hardest of all, I know."

"Never mind; they've got to be perfect. We'll try them again."

She was about to drop the corner of the sheet when the listener sprang out toward the window, leaping with bare feet over the graves and waving his flageolet madly.

"Ah, no—no, madame!" he cried. "Wait one moment, the tiniest, and I shall inspire you!"

"Whoever is that?" cried the voice at the window, rising almost to a scream.

The youth beneath the wall faced round on the intruder. He had turned white and wanted to run, but mastered his voice to inquire gruffly:

"Who the devil are you?"

"I? I am an artist, and as such I salute madame and monsieur, her son. She is greater artist than I, but I shall help her. Her harlequin and columbine shall dance better this time. Why? Because they shall dance to my music, the music that I shall make, here, on this spot, under the stars. I shall play as if possessed—I feel that. I bet you. It is because I have found an artist—an artist in Gantick! O—my—good—Lor!"

He had pulled off his greasy hat, and stood bowing and smiling, showing his white teeth, and holding up his flageolet for the woman to see and convince herself.

"That's all very well," said the boy; "but my mother doesn't want it known yet that she practices at these shadows."

"Ha? It is perhaps forbidden by law."

"Since you have found us out, sir," said the woman, "I will tell you why we are behaving like this, and trust you to tell nobody. I have been left a widow, in great poverty and with this one son, who must be educated as well as his father was. Six months ago, when sadly perplexed, I found out by chance that this small gift of mine might earn me a good income at a—a music hall. Richard, of course, doesn't like my performing at such places, but agrees with me that he must be educated. So we are hiding it from everybody in the village, because we have always been respected here; and, as soon as I have practiced enough, we mean to travel up to London. Of course I shall change my name, and nobody will——"

But the flageolet-player sat suddenly down upon a grave and broke into hysterical laughter.

"Oh—oh—oh! Quick, madame! dance your pretty figures while yet I laugh and before I curse. O stars and planets, look down on this mad world and help me play! And, O monsieur, pardon me if I laugh; for that either you or I are mad is a cock-sure. Dance, madame——"

He put the flageolet to his lips and blew. In a moment or two harlequin and columbine appeared on the screen and began to caper nimbly, naturally, with the wildest grace. The tune was a merry reel and soon began to inspire the performer above. Her small dancers in a twinkling turned into a gamboling elephant, then to a couple of tripping fairies,

A moment after, they were flower and butterfly, then a jigging donkey; then harlequin and columbine again. With each fantastic change the tune quickened and the dance grew wilder, till, tired out, the woman spread her hands wide against the sheet, as if imploring mercy.

The player tossed his flageolet over a headstone and rolled back on the grave in a paroxysm of laughter. Above him the rooks had poured out of their nests and were calling to each other.

"Monsieur," he gasped at last, sitting up and wiping his eyes, "was it good this time?"

"It was quite different, I'll own."

"Then could you spare from the house one little crust of bread? For I am famished."

The youth returned, in a couple of minutes, with some bread and cold bacon.

"Of course," he said, "if you should meet either of us in the village to-morrow you will not recognize us."

The little man bowed. "I agree," said he, "with your mother, monsieur, that you must be educated at all costs."



LOST AND WON *

BY BEATRICE GLEN MOORE

A bleak day in November ; the gray river rough and wild, and dotted here and there with the clumsy flat "*bonnes*" of the fishers of wood,—the dwellers of the river-banks, who in Spring and Autumn go forth in quest of the deals and drift-wood, that fall from the mills to float down with the tide, and the more valuable logs that, escaping from the booms in the shipping season, drift a short distance, and sink. They are armed with a seven-fluked grapnel, iron-hooked poles of a length to reach almost to the river-bottom, and some half-dozen loop-headed iron spikes about a foot long. The work



of the fishers of wood, though done in their own interest, is of greater general importance than one would be apt to suppose; were it not for their periodical harvesting of this flotsam and jetsam the river-bottom would eventually be filled, and the bays blocked.

It was near four in the afternoon, and as our November days are short, most of the fishers were making for home. In a "*bonne*" heading for the South shore sat two men, singing

* A tragic love story. Written for Short Stories with illustrations by W. Granville Smith—copyrighted.

lustily the everlasting "*En roulant ma boule*," as one pulled, and the other steered (Chinese fashion) with an oar, across the fast-darkening river, whose waves spent themselves boisterously against the square old tub. Both seemed elated at the result of their day's work; and well they might be, for the big log they towed was oak, and would fetch about fifty dollars,—quite a haul to them. And besides they had on board a good pile of drift-wood to add to the supply set aside for home consumption in the winter. So, tired and chilled as they were, they roared the chorus with jollity suggestive of electioneering times, and the flowing bowl.

If my reader has ever tried to hoist a log from the river-bed, or seen the attempt made, he will certainly admire the spirit of these fishers. They let down the grapnel, and row up and down, up and down, till it catches—if they are in

luck. Then comes the hauling-up, and many a long pull and strong pull it takes to bring the log to the surface; once there, in goes the grappling-hook, which one of the men grasps, throwing his weight back, while the other fellow drives in the spikes, slips the rope through them—and there is the log, taut and trim. Often, however, they may drag the river all day without catching anything; often also, the log will escape just when you are sure of



it, and then the fishers feel inclined to express their feelings otherwise than by singing. That sort of thing calls for patience as well as muscle. Of course when five or six join forces there is less exertion but less individual profit as well, and as the prizes are generally small, the men prefer to hunt in pairs.

"Well, Armand," said Rosaire Laflamme to his companion, as he strained at his primitive rudder, and glanced back at the log, "that is a thing one would like to do twice at once!"

Armand Barras rested a moment on his oars and nodded his head repeatedly at the treasure, with his eyebrows elevated in wonder and admiration. He was a slight, muscular, sun-bronzed fellow of five and twenty, self-reliant and upright and trustful as a child. He stood somewhat in awe of his friend Rosaire, whose thirty years, aldermanic proportions and big farm impressed him greatly. At this time particularly he felt very ill at ease in his presence, for had not he—a poor boom's-man—only a week ago become the plighted husband of pretty Natalie Demarais, to whom Rosaire had twice offered his lordly hand in vain. He could hardly believe in his own luck. It was indeed a wonderful thing to him that any girl could refuse Rosaire, who was a village ideal, with his shiny black eyes, crimson cheeks and figure that displayed his watch-chain to such advantage on Sundays. And then, the farm! He thought all the more of little Natalie for disregarding the last attraction, but he never expected to understand how she could be blind to all the others. Rosaire was such a good fellow, too, he thought; just as kind as ever to him—just as ready to lend him a hand. Whatever he felt, he did not complain. All this and much more passed through the young fellow's mind as he rested on his oars, when, catching Rosaire watching him with a benevolent smile, he blurted out:

"Oh, Rosaire! If Natalie were only twins!"

This broke the ice at any rate.

"Ta—ta—ta!" said Rosaire. "Let that not trouble you, my boy. I have passed the age of broken hearts. We fought a fair fight and you won; that is all about it. After all the little Natalie is young for me. I am very fond of you both, and if you will let me play big brother, and do what I can for you I shall be just as happy and eat as much ragout as usual. You will need all you can get, and you will not let Natalie sew any more, I suppose? And there is her old grandmother, too. Is that a bargain? Then prove it by accepting my share of the log; you know that I do not need it, and you will please me very much."

Armand looked up at the other as he stood swinging back

and forth with the oar. He could not say a word but grasped Rosaire's hand as in a vice. The rest of the journey was made in silence. Armand was too much affected to chat, as, no doubt, was Rosaire, who beamed placidly and blandly on his young companion, with a look of cheerful resignation, all his own, on his innocent countenance.

Natalie Demarais was quite a local celebrity, as noted for her toilette and temper as for her personal attractions. She was very poor, but her sharp black eyes, ruddy cheeks and plump figure were ample compensation for pinched finances in the eyes of her less favored sisters; not to mention her crowning glory of six stiff, black ringlets that the eye of mortal man had never beheld disheveled. The secret of their



solidity had never been discovered, and it was rumored, with admiring wonder, that even when Natalie "launched herself," the ringlets stood their ground as firmly as ever. Natalie was in the habit of launching herself ever and anon, on the slightest provocation, much to the distress of her law-abiding grandmother, who, at the first danger-signal would wail in her quavering treble, "Natalie, for the love of the Good, *don't* launch thyself!" But when once it pleased Natalie to frown disapproval, when once she had given utter-

ance to that ominous "*It appears*," with outspread hands, backward steps and sarcastic inflection, you might as well try to stop the St. Lawrence as to attempt to restrain the torrent of her wrath. The clatter of dishes, flourish of skirts, impassioned eloquence, disdainful sniffs, were the inevitable outcome of these two words as were also the final flounce, and flood of tears that closed the debate.

Even Armand, whom she loved devotedly, did not escape these periodical whirlwinds of rage. He liked her none the less for that, for he knew well that that was the worst of her ; and that apart from these explosions there was no fault to be found with Natalie. He could tell at a glance when matters were running askew ; and to relieve the awkwardness of the situation would say softly : "Launch thyself, my flea ; it is the time for it."

If he spoke at the critical moment the backward steps would be forthcoming, and "the flea" would emulate her namesake's jerks, hops, and twists ; but if he happened to precipitate matters by speaking ere the critical moment arrived she would begin with the tears, and work backwards ; and the cessation of hostilities was only to be effected by the promise of a glass necklace, or a pair of flaring red stockings. His right to signal the relief of her repressed emotions she did not dispute ; but she maintained that the choice of the supreme moment should in justice be left to herself.

Rosaire Laflamme was often the chief cause of an outburst of this description ; for Natalie in nowise shared Armand's good opinion of him, and had given him to understand as much on more than one occasion. Her remarks to Rosaire when he ventured to come within earshot, being characterized by brevity rather than politeness. The great man's patience was untiring ; he bore with her as with a spoilt child, parried her war-mutterings, and cheerfully hoped that she would "understand" him some day. He helped and obliged Armand whenever an opportunity presented itself ; took his affairs under his own immediate supervision and was as condescendingly benevolent as ever he could be.



All this, conjoined with his good-humored pertinacity in striving for her good graces, invested him with an interest that Natalie scorned to admit to herself in the first instance ; and finally reduced her to a state of armed neutrality—to Armand's great delight. He had a greater faith in Rosaire's foresight and knowledge of human nature than ever ; for had not that sage always heard, with apparent incredulity, Natalie's assertion that she would always hate even his boots.

In spite of Rosaire's backing, Armand did not get along very well ; the shipping season was over, and the booms closed ; he had not succeeded in getting winter employment in any of the lumber camps, and in consequence his spirits were as low as his resources—for the hope of marrying Natalie within a year had been in vain. He thought lovingly of the "High countries," (as they call the United States among themselves), but whence was the money to come to take him there ? He had heard glowing accounts of them from such of his associates as had gone there in quest of work. Something for every man to do,—and then such fabulous wages ! While here with every season there was less work in the booms. This was certainly reliable information ; but there were other attractions in the prospect than these, for one of his friends, who had developed sporting tendencies in his travels, assured him that by way of relaxation he chased dragons round the streets of Chicago, or strolled to Philadelphia to shoot wolves in the woods. (!) Whether he be-

lieved it all himself was an open question ; but he assured Armand that it was much livelier than Saint E—— to reside in. Armand, at any rate, was firmly convinced of the Nimrod's veracity, and his main desire was to make Natalie rich by going to "Saint (!) Chicago."



In course of time this came to the ears of Rosaire Laflamme, who not only gave his approval but likewise supplied his young protégé with enough money to take him to his destination, and to keep him from want till he secured employment. This broke down the last barriers between Rosaire and the fiery Natalie ; she was forced to admit

that he was indeed a friend, and felt she was a monster of ingratitude for not liking him better.

So it happened that on Christmas night Armand bade Natalie a long good-bye with a hopeful heart; carrying with him her promise to be true, and Rosaire's promise to take care of her and her grandmother till he returned, and the wedding took place.

Natalie had no heart for the New Year's festivities; nor did she "launch herself" for a long time. But she knew it was all for the best, and never lost spirit. Rosalie came only when there was some odd turn to be done, or service to be performed, except when he brought a letter from Armand. Neither Natalie nor her grandmother could read; so Armand's letters were addressed to kind Rosaire, who took a pleasure in interpreting his sprawling caligraphy.

The year crept away; but Armand did not speak of returning as yet. He had drifted out West, and was succeeding beyond his hopes. He said furthermore that he only needed a small capital to become as rich as Rosaire, and then Natalie would never know the need of a dollar again.

Rosaire said little on the subject at the time; but about a month afterwards he remarked jestingly: "You will hate me more than ever now, Natalie, for I sent Armand something that will keep him away a little longer."

And Natalie burst into a flood of tears, and positively hugged him!

Things went on as usual in the little village. Many said that Natalie was a very foolish girl to throw away her chances as she did; for Rosaire's unchanging kindness did not pass unnoticed, and Natalie was the only one who did not know that he loved her still,—although he thought the secret was his own.

Suddenly Armand's letters ceased. Rosaire, at Natalie's request, wrote him letter after letter in the little smoke-darkened kitchen, but she never got an answer. Though months went by without bringing her a line from him, she never lost faith in her lover, and went about her simple duties bravely in spite of the pain gnawing at her heart.

It was now two years since Armand left, and Rosaire was coming to spend Christmas night with her and her now bed-ridden grandmother. It was some consolation to see him, as he always consoled and encouraged her, and poor Natalie

needed encouragement sadly, for to add to her misery, she could hardly earn enough to make ends meet.

She stood up as she heard the latch click and reached for the cedar branch to brush the snow from his clothes ; but at the first look, it dropped from her hands—that white, haggard face turned her blood cold.

“Speak, Rosaire ! What is it?” she cried clutching him by the shoulders.

“O, poor Natalie!” he gasped, holding towards her an open letter, “Armand—”

“Not—not *dead*!” she wailed.

“Yes, my poor child, *dead*,—murdered,—three months ago!”

Natalie looked blankly at him for a moment’s space, swayed forward and fell unconscious into his arms.

Life seemed over now for poor Natalie ; she had nothing to hope for now. Nothing even to occupy her thoughts, for the poor old grandmother had died not long after the news of Armand’s death. Rosaire had given her all the particulars, which he learned from some Western friend of the dead man. He had been stabbed in the back in a saloon, and died almost at once. He was not known to have given offense and Natalie solemnly registered a vow that she would revenge him, if ever fate brought his murderer within her reach. This idea took the form of a mania and her face wore a look of suppressed fury ; but in all else she remained unchanged.

Six months after the news of Armand’s sad end, Rosaire for the third time offered her marriage and this time he was accepted. Natalie was unable to make a living in the village any longer ; as far as she was concerned life held nothing more, and Rosaire had been so true and kind. Then too Armand had cared so much for him. Yes, she would be a good wife to him but she would live for her revenge !

It was the eve of his wedding and Rosaire after bidding Natalie good-night strolled down to the barber-shop to have a chat at that popular rendezvous. Just as he went to cross the road he heard himself called by name, and turning, found himself face to face with Armand Barras !

“Yes, myself !” cried Armand “back again, and so glad to see you ! I thought I would give you a little surprise and

came six months earlier than the time I said, you see!" Then he ran on about how much money he had made in the West and about Natalie, and his gratitude and so on; while Rosaire stood like a man turned to stone.

"Aren't you glad to have me back?" Armand asked at last. "Too glad to be able to say much just yet," rejoined the other with an effort.

"Well, I am happy that you think well of me still. I have brought you a souvenir of the West as a token of my gratitude. But Natalie! is she as well as when you wrote last? Did she like my portrait? take me to her at once!"

"No Armand," said Rosaire slowly, "you must wait a little, she is not prepared,—the shock—the surprise,—who knows what might be the result? She has not been well at all lately. It is late; but I shall go and break the news for she would never forgive me if I delayed until morning."

"Very well," said Armand, patient as ever; thinking how changed and broken down poor Rosaire was. "Be at the door, at half-past ten," said Rosaire, and with another grasp of the hand they separated; Armand going into the barber-shop, and Rosaire striding away in the direction of Natalie's dwelling.

She was much surprised at seeing him again that night, and more so at his manner. Clutching her roughly by the arm, he drew her into the room.

"Natalie" he hissed,—"*this is more than your wedding eve!*"

"What do you mean Rosaire?" she cried, startled at his wild looks.

"What I say; the hour of your vengeance is at hand! I have met Armand's murderer—it is Labrie, who went with him to the West;—in ten minutes more he will be outside that door. Oh, I have planned well! Do as you will. Poor Armand, poor Armand? Natalie, is revenge still your heart's desire?"

No need to ask! One look showed that all the evil of her nature was aroused, as was his. Without a word he drew a sheath-knife from his belt and handed it to her; and they stood side by side watching the clock and listening to the footsteps that drew nearer and nearer, and then stopped.

Natalie crept across the room, lifted the latch noiselessly, threw open the door, and with one spring raised the knife

and plunged it to the hilt in her lover's breast. As he fell across the threshold, Rosaire stepped forward and raised his



head turning the dead face towards Natalie. "Armand, oh, Armand!" she shrieked. "Yes," said Rosaire quietly, "If *I* lost, at least *he* did not win!"

Natalie, her eyes glittering with madness, tore the knife from Armand's breast as she realized in a moment the treachery of years. With a bound Rosaire gained the road, and rushed down across the booms; still she followed. He reached the old wharf, speeding down it in the moonlight, still she followed but at the water's edge he turned as at bay, with his old calm smile. On she came, vengeance personified, her arm raised above her head, and the long knife glittering.

She was upon him!

Opening his arms wide to receive the stroke, he clasped her to him passionately and together they fell, down, down, and the dark waters closed over them. With the knife in his heart and Natalie's form in his arms, Rosaire wore his old quiet smile.

THE CURATE'S CONSCIENCE*

While Mr. Softly was still a curate he took a long step on the road to preferment; he married a wife with money. Miss Lefort had long been in search of a man virtuous enough to come up to her high standard of conduct, and in Mr. Softly she found what she sought; for he was an embodiment of the Christian virtues in general and of meekness in particular. She was not exactly beautiful, nor was she so young as she had been fifteen, or even ten, years before; but she had an income which was large in comparison to the £120 a year at which Mr. Softly's services were valued by his vicar, and that gave her confidence. In three months after she made up her mind to have him, she led her blushing bridegroom to the altar, and the strains of "The Voice That Breathed O'er Eden" announced that one more unfortunate had fallen a victim to the predatory instincts of the weaker sex.

The honeymoon waxed and waned, and was succeeded by five other moons, each of which no doubt contained its due proportion of sweetening matter. For his £120 a year the vicar obtained the services of a curate and a half, and Mr. Softly was the half.

"Simply, there's a letter for you from London," said Mrs. Softly one morning at breakfast.

"From London?" replied Softly, in meek surprise. "From whom, I wonder?"

"It's from my Uncle Lefort," said the lady. "He wants you to go up and talk to him about investing that £1,000 of mine."

"Really, my darling," said Softly, flushing up nervously, "I wish you would let me open my letters for myself."

"I didn't notice that it was addressed to you," said his wife carelessly, "and it wouldn't have mattered if I had. If there's nothing in your letters to be ashamed of, you needn't mind my opening them."

"No, of course not; but still——"

"But still you'd much rather I didn't. Oh, Simply, do you think I don't know?"

"Well, well, my love, never mind," said the model hus-

*Selected from "Vanity Fair."

band, "there's no harm done. When does he want to see me?"

"To-day. But you can't go to-day. I want you."

"But Boadicea, don't you think——"

"No, Simperly, I don't. He must wait till to-morrow. I can't make out why he wants you at all. You know nothing about business."

"Well," said Simperly, timidly, "you see the money is in a trust account in his name and mine, and he can't do anything without my signature."

Mrs. Softly looked as if she had something to remark on that point, but she only said:

"You must write and say you'll be with him at eleven. If you go by the eight o'clock train you can be back for tea and not waste your time in London. Write now!"

Simperly had not finished his breakfast, but he arose and did as he was bid. Then he prepared to set about his day's work, or such part of it as Mrs. Softly considered him capable of performing.

Next morning he was up betimes, for he was delighted at the thought of spending a day in town. Arrived at the station he got into an empty carriage and prepared to finish the bread and butter, which he had snatched from his interrupted breakfast, hoping to have the carriage to himself all the way to London. But just as the train was starting, the door was thrown open and a lady was flung in by the guard. The lady was not troubled with shyness, nor, apparently, was she in the habit of being treated with neglect, and at last she said, half laughing, half piqued:

"Don't you remember me, Mr. Softly?"

The curate turned round, with a weak smile. "I don't think I've ever had the pleasure——" he simpered, and then broke off his speech and sat staring at her. "Why, surely," he stammered, "it can't be Maria Jenkins."

"No, indeed, it can't," the girl said, laughing. "There's no Maria Jenkins now. I'm Marian Jermyn, that's succeeded to all her rights. I don't see why you should pretend you don't know her after all the lessons you have taught her. Don't you remember the Sunday school treat—let me see, two—yes, two years ago last August, and the prize I got for punctual attendance?"

"You deserved it, Maria," said Softly, with warmth; "you

deserved it. You were the best girl in the class that year, and I told the vicar that I was sure you would be a credit to our teaching."

"Oh, yes—I am that," said the girl; "I've often been told so."

She put out her foot and looked down at it smiling, as if there were some secret between them, and Simperly noticed that she had very long eyelashes and very delicate eyebrows. He also noticed that she was handsome, which he did not remember to have remarked when she attended the Sunday school. His gaze traveled downward till it reached the foot at which she was looking so confidentially. It was a slender foot—one that would have lain in a man's hand—and was incased in a tan shoe, and—but here Simperly resolutely closed his eyes. He would not look at the color of her st—Mrs. Softly wore white ones, and for him no other color was possible.

"And where are you living now, Maria?" he said after a pause. "Your good mother told me that you had obtained a situation in one of the large establishments in London, and that she was going there to make a home for you, because the temptations were so great for a young girl."

"Oh, yes; I got a good situation enough," said Miss Jermyn, "but I've a much better one now. I found some good friends in London, Mr. Softly, and I went on the stage."

"On the stage!" cried the curate, horrified. "O, Maria, how shocking! Is this the result of our teaching. Don't you know——"

"Now, now, now!" she said, laughing. "I think I know more about it than you do, Mr. Softly. But why do you sit over there? Come over and take this seat and let us talk about old times. I've heard so much about you in the village."

Simperly hesitated; but he caught sight of that diabolical shoe and went.

"And so you're married, are you?" began the ci-devant Maria, when he was seated. "Now tell me all about it. There's one of the boys——"

"One of the—what?"

"One of my gentlemen friends wants me to marry him, and I want to know what marriage is like."

Then Softly told her what marriage was like—not his,

perhaps, but marriage as he conceived it to be in most cases—and he told her so much that she grew quite interested, and thence he passed by a natural connection to love; and it appeared that she had had some experience of that delightful passion, and told him all the circumstances. And then she felt a draught, and he suggested that they should change seats, and she did change hers. And they grew still more confidential, and she told him what a hollow, frivolous life one led on the stage, and how tired she was of it, and that she was only anxious to leave it and marry, and how she should worship her husband if she only could get one who would love her, and Simperly rejoiced to think that he had brought her into such a becoming frame of mind. And by that time they were very near London.

"And you really will keep your word," said Simperly, pressing her hand, as the train left Willesden.

"I will," she answered, looking away from him. And she added to her own soul, "or I won't."

"That's a dear girl, and here's something to buy a little wedding present from your old parson." And the good man slipped into her hand a little check that he had drawn to pay for some books that he had long wanted.

"Hello, Softly," cried young Wilgoose, the squire's son, meeting him at the platform at the Euston and thumping him on the back till he quivered all over. "And what are you doing in the modern Babylon without your wife?"

"I'm up on business," said Simperly with conscious pride.

"In—deed; and may I ask who was your fair friend with the tan shoes?"

Simperly blushed. "I think," said he, nervously, "you must remember her—Maria Jenkins, whose father had the postoffice at Dulcote."

Wilgoose gave a long whistle. "Marian Jermyn, by Jove! I thought I knew her. Well, I hope you had a pleasant journey."

Simperly blushed again under the lad's eye.

"Oh, yes," he stammered, "very pleasant. She told me she had gone on the stage."

"That poor stage!"

"But she promised me to leave it, and said she only wanted to get married and lead a good life."

"Married! Marian Jermyn married! Did you believe her?"

"Of course, I did," said Simperly indignantly. "A girl is not altogether lost because she is an actress! And I gave her a little wedding present, too."

"The deuce, you did! I say Softly, what would your wife say to that?"

"It was only a little check for £2 that I happened to have in my pocket," said Simperly, with a nervous laugh.

"A check! I say you're getting on. What an awfully indiscreet thing to do. How do you know she won't alter it into £20?"

Simperly turned pale at the idea. "Wh—what makes you say that?"

"Oh, well, I didn't quite mean that. But it's all bosh about her being on the stage. She's in with an awful bad lot, and I shouldn't care to have my name knocking about among them if I were a parson," said the lad shaking his head, weighty with the profound experience of three-and-twenty. "Do you know what 'blackmail' means?"

Simperly had a vague idea that it meant something unpleasant, but he would not inquire what it was, and went about his business, wishing from the bottom of his heart that he had not been quite so—generous. However, he forgot his indiscretion in the company of his wife's uncle, who was much more genial than his niece, and gave him a luncheon that put more color in his cheeks than had been seen there for some time. After which they paid a visit to the stock broker's, where a safe, but not remunerative, investment was soon found for Mrs. Softly's £1,000, and, the necessary check having been duly drawn and handed him, Simperly hurried away, so as to be home for tea.

A few days after the curate's lamentable falling away from grace a letter arrived at Mrs. Softly's house addressed to him with "private" written across the seal, and the housemaid, who, like the rest of the world, was fond of her meek master, found means to convey it to him in the absence of her mistress. He opened it with a horrible sinking inside him, and read the following words:

DEAR SIR: Your account appears to be overdrawn in our books in the sum of £3, 2s. 6d., and I shall be obliged by your remitting us that sum at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,

FRED WILSON, Manager.

The letter dropped from his hand, the room swam round

him and he fell into a chair as though he was shot. He saw it all in an instant. Wilgoose was a true prophet, and this is what he meant by blackmail. Only, instead of altering his figures to £20 the heartless wretch had altered them to £200, and he was penniless! His bank account represented all the money that he had in the world, including what was left of the wedding present of his only solvent relative. During the afternoon meal he sat and shivered with fright under the inquiring eye of his wife, and when tea was finished he took his courage in both hands and began in a hoarse, low voice:

"A-hem, a-hem! Boadicea—I'm sorry to say that I've had bad news to-day."

Mrs. Softly stared at him and said nothing.

"You—you—you remember Maria Jenkins, whose father had the post-office?"

"Yes," said the lady, shortly. "I remember her. Go on."

"Well," she was in my carriage going to London Tuesday."

"Oh, she was, was she? Well, Simperly. Go on."

"Oh! She told me she had gone on the stage, and——"

Mrs. Softly rose, with a face like a gravestone.

"We will talk of this presently," she said in an awful voice.

"I can't bear it now."

"But you must bear it now," cried Softly, with the courage of despair. "Oh, Boadicea, it wasn't my fault, indeed. I made her promise to leave it. And she was so penitent, and said she wanted to be married, and I begged her to do so. And—and I gave her a little check—only £2—for a wedding present."

"You did what?" Mrs. Softly shrieked. "You gave that sly, scheming, flirting, ugly little minx a check?"

"Oh, Boadicea, don't look like that. I thought it was a kind thing to do, and now the girl has altered it to £200, and drawn out all of my money, your money, both of our moneys."

Then the scene began, and it was even worse than Softly had anticipated. Mrs. Softly gave full vent to her rage and jealousy. She utterly refused to believe his story. She avowed that he and that abandoned woman had spent all the money between them on their own disgraceful pleasures, and that he was throwing all the blame on her to excuse himself. She raved, she wept, she talked about sending for the police; she called her husband every uncomplimentary name that she

could think of, and at last, in a transport of perfectly genuine passion, she rushed out of the room vowing that she would not spend another night under the conjugal roof.

"I have come to wish you good-by," she said, when, after two hours, she returned to the dining-room. "I have no wish to part in anger. To-night I shall sleep at my sister's house, and to-morrow you will hear from my solicitor."

Then she left the house, taking with her the key of the tea caddy, and Softly was so utterly crushed that he had not the pluck to make a face after her.

It was a mere wreck of the curate that slunk into the bank next day and asked to see the manager. When he obtained speech of that gentleman he could hardly articulate his words, and the pleasant greeting that he received seemed to him the most heartless mockery.

"Oh, Mr. Wilson," he said in trembling tones, "what am I to do? Are you sure that there hasn't been a mistake?"

"A mistake," said the manager briskly, "I hope not. What is it, Mr. Softly?"

Without speaking, the curate handed him his own letter with a look that would have melted an iceberg. The manager glanced at it and rang a bell.

"Mr. Smith," he said to the clerk who came in, "Mr. Softly thinks there has been a mistake about this. Will you please see to it at once?"

The clerk disappeared and returned in a few minutes.

"It's quite right, sir," he said to Softly; "the last check drawn was for £1,000, and—"

"A thousand pounds!" cried the curate. "Why, I hadn't two hundred to my account! Why didn't you stop payment? Why didn't you send for a policeman? Why didn't you detain her?"

The manager and the clerk looked at each other. The clerk raised his eyebrows, and then his eyes fell on the letter, and he smiled to himself.

"I'm afraid there has been a slight mistake, sir," he said. "The account that is overdrawn is that in the names of Softly and Lefort—the trust account. It was a piece of carelessness on the part of the clerk who sent this notice."

How Softly left the bank he never knew; but by the time he got into the street he had quite realized what an exceedingly uncomfortable possession is a guilty conscience.

ETCHING: EXQUISITE SENSIBILITY*

BY ELIZABETH CAVAZZA

She struck a match, lighted the wax taper on her writing-desk, then extinguished the match. A sudden remorse pricked her. Fire is life, is sacred. She had evoked and then quenched it. A treachery and murder in miniature. The little flame had been so golden, so warm; the match had not asked to be lighted, and now it was spent, valueless, discarded. The idea was worth a sonnet; she took the attitude of a Sappho.

In what darkness of chaos—she thought—was born the first spark that caught from sphere to sphere, until there was light? What divine mysteries made a tremor in the air around the fires upon the altar of Vesta? What passionate impulse urges sunward the wings of every flame? And is smoke the acrid, grey sorrow of that ardent joy . . . and ashes its end? Was that match happy in its one vital moment, did it suffer when she quenched it with a breath? Had it the better or the worse fate, to be awakened and slain? Did its companions, as yet unscorched, regard it with compassion, or envy, or scorn?

She was touched with profound pity, which she loved herself for feeling. She held the match between her rose-tipped fingers; its slim shape, its charred head fascinated her. Having laid it down softly, she melted odorous sealing-wax above the flame of the taper—for this the match was lighted—and with burning, dark red drops sealed the cruel letter written to her lover. She was tired of him, of his great, adoring eyes, of his gentleness that resented no caprice of hers; weary of experimenting with his emotions.

Finally, he had implored her to marry him, threatening to blow out his brains if she denied him hope.

Bah! an ugly end for him and a scandal for her! However, he would importune her no more. This letter would finish everything. She summoned the maid to post it. That stupid affair concluded, she would begin the sonnet:

"Poor ghost of flame that haunts my heart" . . .

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TOM FENTON'S STRATEGY*

BY KATHARINE BRYANT NOLAN

The trail to Sleepy Gulch wound up a steep hill. The Sleepy Gulchers called it Fly-a-way. From the foot, the road was visible in circuitous, sanguinary patches that dotted the hillside irregularly. Small red whirlwinds played above these patches, as the wind rustled amidst the branches of certain dead trees standing, with belted trunks, like miss-shapen spectres. Then the winds died away in the forest, that grew dense and black, as it stretched straight on up toward the serried mountain tops. The whirlwinds scurried breathlessly around, hiding behind the rocks or rushing down into the numerous rain-washed gullies. The rocks and trees cut their shadows sharply on the brown and yellow grasses, as the Sleepy Gulch stage toiled slowly up, up, with creaking yellow wheels, and prophetically stained tires.

Old Martin's girl sat upon the back seat. A long red feather drooped low over her light glossy hair, roughed by the breezes. Nancy Martin was lively in her ways, and that red plume danced smartly to and fro, as she carried on a running fire of conversation that was lavishly interlarded with *bon mots*. Young Mrs. Eastman sat beside her.

Tom Fenton's attention was centered on Jim—the off horse. Jim was rashly inclined to balkiness, and on an uphill grade this was a risky sort of friskiness. Tom Fenton objected to it strongly, yet he was in a measure helpless when it came to Fly-a-way hill. He had only a brake-locked wheel to depend on.

Nancy's cheeks vied with the old-fashioned damask roses in Mrs. Eastman's flower garden. Her eyes were a dark brown, that turned to amber in certain high lights. She wore a dress of blue satine, covered with a pattern of vivid red flowers and sprawling green leaves. A scarlet sunshade rested across her lap, and her large red hands were folded over it easily, as she talked. Her shrill laughter broke into

*The author of this tale has been awarded the prize for the best Love Story. Written for Short Stories.—Copyrighted.

cheerful little echoes—mocking little voices Tom Fenton thought them;—voices that mocked his love. Tom was by nature poetical, and he adored old Martin's daughter.

Mrs. Eastman was thin and pale. The lines in her face were drawn with weariness and worry, and marked her as a woman intensely resigned to her fate. She held the youngest Eastman gingerly in her arms, and dandled him anxiously upon her knees, rocking herself violently back and forth whenever the child's eyelids quivered, or its small red mouth opened. She wore a gray silk dress and her bonnet was a fashionable, dainty thing. Under the influence of the weather her hair had straightened out, and strayed about her face in the contrary breezes. Her lace-trimmed mantle had slipped to one side, and at length Nancy folded it up as a nuisance to be dispensed with. The dust lay thickly upon her back, settling in geographical formations over her shoulders and puffed sleeves. Her dress was loose and wrinkled fiercely under the violence of those maternal joggings. As for her bonnet, that had fallen to one side and perched at a comical angle.

Half way up the glowing, dusty trail Jim balked and Tom Fenton brought the brake down with a crash. Jim had determined to give his companions in slavery a rest, and nothing moved him. Tom was powerless. The grade was steepest at that point. Nancy sprang out, resolutely tugging a gnarled tree trunk into place behind the left wheel, with many groans and an infinite amount of patience. Then Jim's ear was treated to certain manipulations by means of a long, silvery, tubular grass stem. The husky, irritating little glume dived in and out and out and in untiringly.

Tom watched these helpful proceedings on the part of Nancy Martin with adoring eyes. Her sleeve slipped back and showed a rounded arm; and Nancy's hand, although large, was shapely. Her full round bosom rose and fell evenly under the yellowish laces that trimmed her dress. She was absorbed in the attempt to control Jim's imaginative temperament, and her eyes were riveted upon his ears. Jim shook his head and snorted obstinately. The leaders swung round to eye him and enjoy the situation.

"Ef Jim sh'd take et inter his head ter start, Tom, you jest let him go; I'll walk up," Miss Martin observed.

The sun hung just above the snowy top of Fiery Face,

lighting up the white ridges that extended down into the ravines and gorges. These crimson lines were growing fainter and the banks of snow had begun to turn gray before Jim's imagination seized on the idea of oats. At that instant he pricked up his long ears and went forward with a dash. The leaders broke into a gallop and Nancy Martin watched them with a smile upon her face.

The girl was in no hurry, and she sat down upon the snag, when it was safely out of the trail, with her chin upon her hand to gaze at Fiery Face and think out the solution of some questions. These wild gorges and ravines were fascinating in themselves, and Nancy felt that some crisis in her life was before her. An intangible chilliness settled round her heart. Tom Fenton's adoration was undoubtedly sweet, but Mrs. Martin favored him violently, and Nancy was contrary by nature.

A wild sweet whistle, like the whistling of a mocking bird, struck on her charmed ear, and Nancy smiled. It floated from far down the trail airily. Nancy waived the solution of the problem, disposing of the crisis, while she flirted at the dust in which her shoes were enveloped.

"That's Bob fer sure," she said. "Won't Tom be ravin' though? He'll cuss Jim fer one while I reckon." Nance gave her skirts a savage shake and pawed at her shoulders, nervously, just as Bob Simpson appeared in the path that skirted a small grove of trees to the right of the road. Bob quickened his pace when his eye fell upon this girl, of old Martin's, standing like a full-blown peony in the red soil of the thoroughfare.

"Hello, Nance! Wal I wasn't a-lookin' fer you, Nance," he said. "Where be you a-goin'?"

"Oh, I'm a-goin' home, Bob. I come up on the stage and Jim balked, so I got out to chuck a snag under the old wheel. I didn't want ter go a-slidin' backwuds down Fly-a-way with Mis' Eastman an' that kid er hers."

"Wal, I sh'd think Tom Fenton 'd be a-fixin' of his own snags instid of lettin' you do it, an' you all rigged up. But I say, Nance, you look stunnin'! Where hev you bin?"

"I bin over to Aunt Susy's. She's got a new baby. They named et fer me an' I wanted ter see it. But you see, Tom had to hold the brake down, an' he couldn't keep his hoof on thet brake an' yank thet snag under the wheel. I guess he

set there, like patience on a monument, something like an hour an' a half 'fore Jim started up hill lickity split, whack-ity bang. Mis' Eastman she set through it all like a bunch of cut an' dried thoroughwort, but I s'pose she thought Tom Fenton an' I wuz good fer it. She was a-shakin the kid mostly. I thought mebbe he'd go off inter a thousand pieces."

Bob laughed disagreeably. He was jealous of Tom Fenton. Tom was forehanded. Bob's visions were glorious ones, but as yet he was mefely an unlucky prospector.

"Yes," he answered, ignoring 'Tom. "You've struck it. Mis' Eastman is egg'sactly like a bunch of dried thoroughwort. It aint safe to chew much on Mis' Eastman 'nless yer fond er bitter."

"Yer right, Bob," Nance laughed boisterously. "Yer right. She do make me powerful mad, as ma says. I was over to her house night a-fore last, an' I was a tendin' the baby so's ter give Charlie Eastman a little spell of rest. She do make such a slave uv that man, an' she up an' said I was awful onhandy with kids. Girls thet put on lugs, and fooled along, generally got left in the lurch. You'd a-thought I was forty ef I was a day, ef you'd heard her go on, an' Charlie he set an' swallered it down whole. His mouth made me think of a big fly-trap."

"Wal, you see her pa up an' dyin' an' leavin' her them shares in the Red Dog mine, made a heap er difference with Charlie Eastman. He can afford to humor her. I don't blame enny woman fur gittin' her own way ef she can. It's pretty comfortable ter hev yer own way in this world, seems ter me."

"Yes, so 'tis. Wal, I guess Sarah Eastman stands a show er gittin' hers." Nancy spoke wearily. They were almost sure of meeting Tom Fenton face to face when the summit of Fly-a-way hill was reached.

Sleepy Gulch nestled in among the hills and mountains lovingly. It was like a red and cream-tinted cherry in a green bowl. The inhabitants of Sleepy Gulch were a dashing sort of people. They were nothing unless they were florid and the houses were painted in various hues of cinabar and vermillion. The post-office was especially gay, owing to a recent coat of paint.

Tom Fenton stood among the loungers around the door.

He stepped forward briskly and Nance walked into the office between the two men.

"Wal," Nancy smiled, 'Jim showed himself a rustler, Tom, when he did get a move on himself."

"Yes, Jim's a-gettin' fresh," Tom answered. Tom looked cross.

"Yer might trade him off fer a jack-knife er a saw-hoss," Bob suggested with a grin.

"Want ter trade?" Tom queried savagely.

"No, I a'nt got no use fer Jim."

The two men glowered at each other.

"No?" Tom spoke with a rising inflection, and as if lost in amazement.

"No," Bob answered decidedly. "I've more respect fer my life than that, an' ef the Sleepy Gulch stage don't go flukin' backwards down Fly-a-way hill some day, 'twon't be Jim's fault. He's got his plans all laid."

Nancy hurried out and Bob strolled out after her.

"Do yer want ter be shot, Bob Simpson?" the girl asked when they were out of ear-shot of that group around the post-office.

"Tom Fenton's an ass," Bob answered huffily.

"Wal, many a man has been shot dead in his tracks fer sayin' less'n you did. Don't you go rousin' up Tom Fenton. Tom's all right, an' peaceable enough when he's let alone."

They had reached the Martins's gate and Bob made no answer.

"You'll be ready fer the ball early, Nancy."

"Yes, I'll be on hand."

"Wal, I'll be after yer about seven. Give me all yer waltzes, won't yer?"

"You can go along now. Jest as ef you wanted all *my* waltzes. There's Sue Hooker."

Bob looked sheepish, but he said stoutly:

"Well, I do. Don't you go off with Tom now. I'll be on hand. Wal, s'long."

"S'long," Nance answered.

Sue Hooker had made a dead set at Bob. A girl so tremendously in love is not without her fascinations. Bob liked to be worshipped, but he also knew that Mrs. Martin had declared that he should never marry Nance. It was agreeable to keep the old lady on tenter hooks, and he hadn't made

up his mind which girl he liked—which girl he wished. He had nothing to marry on excepting his good looks and a prospector's luck.

The Martin residence was a small weather-beaten wooden structure, with a curb roof. There were some feeble architectural embellishments. A fret-work fence perched upon the ridge-pole, and the gables and cornices were elaborately gotten up, with a flowery designed pattern.

A vine was trained upon the front, of that variety known as the pipe vine. Its round leaves looked sickly, and the meerschauts underneath were weak appearing and hung languidly. The nasturtiums straggled half way over the yard in all directions, from the rock work in the centre. The gate was at the side, on Willow Street, and the path was bordered with box. The fence was a paling affair, strung on wires. It was of the same silver-gray tint as the house, and stood unevenly for the heavy rains had undermined the posts in various places. Nancy ate her supper alone and then helped her mother with the dishes.

When it grew dark, Mrs. Martin put on her sunbonnet and ran over to Tom Fenton's. Tom was smoking on the seat just outside the door. The bench was constructed out of a rough board, nailed on two upright planks. Mrs. Martin sat down beside him and untied her sunbonnet.

"Bob Simpson—he came home with her. You know it, Tom?"

"Yes, I see 'em." Tom had no notion of betraying Jim. Jim's exploit should remain dead and buried.

Mrs. Martin knew he was obstinate, but it was necessary to go on. "Ma's gone out," Tom said, between two whiffs.

"Wal, it happens, I come over to see *you*. Bob's a-comin' to take her to the ball termorrer night. He's a-comin' early, an' he's axed her ter give him all her waltzes. Hasn't she promised you none?" Mrs. Martin turned an anxious, drawn face toward Tom. The sunbonnet interfered with her vision, but she did not take it off. Her hands had dropped into her lap when she released the strings, and were folded meekly together as if she had done away with all the vanities of existence.

"No, I ain't hed enny chance ter ask her. I was a-reck-onin' on goin' over ter see her jest as soon as I'd smoked this pipe out."

"Wal, Bob's got 'em, with all yer hangin' back."

"Curse that Jim!" Tom burst out.

"Yes, thāt hoss is dead agin yer luck, sure. You'd better set about sellin' that hoss the minnit this ball is over." Mrs. Martin's hands fluttered. "Vance told me," she said.

"I'll sell the hoss, Mrs. Martin, on my next trip."

"Ef you could any way manidge to delay Bob Simpson termorrer night an' make her mad, you'd be a block a-head. Maybe she'd promise then and there to hev ye, an' if she gives her word she'll keep it. That's one thing erbout Nance. She'll stick her word out."

"Yes, Nance is famous fer that."

"Yer kin bet on it." Mrs. Martin spoke encouragingly. The handsome Bob Simpson aroused an intense hatred within her thin and withered bosom.

"Bob Simpson is a low-down scrub. He's a-puttin' on airs an' lugs like a full-blowed millionaire, an' he ain't got nary a red. He's a-playin' Nance, an' she ain't got sense enough to see it. She likes you a powerful lot, Tom; I know that; but she's too all-fired sure of you, an' she enjoys foolin' with Bob. She'll fool jest as long as you'll let her, an' I dassent say nothin'."

"I s'pose ef Bob struck et rich an' set out to hev Nance she'd marry him?"

Tom spoke reflectively. Mrs. Martin felt that Tom Fenton was developing some scheme in his mind. She resolved to let him work it out to completeness.

"You've struck et, Tom. That's eggsactly what's a worritin' of me so," and Mrs. Martin chuckled to herself as she fluttered down the path to the gate. She held the strings of her sunbonnet tightly, one in each hand.

Maratti's hall was brilliant in scarlet bunting by seven o'clock the next evening. The kerosene lamps had been freshly filled and the chimneys highly polished, yet the hall was dark and pungent with the disagreeable odor from the lamps. Great bunches of artificial flowers were plastered upon the bare walls in conspicuous places. It added to the festive appearance that put the committee into such high spirits. They had determined to out do any committee that had ever preceded them. Besides the White Bear Ditchers were tremendous critics, and they had already begun to arrive.

Tom Fenton darted about in a flaming red necktie. His hair shone with highly perfumed bear's oil and he had parted it in the middle. It had taken at least half-an-hour of good time to plaster it down becomingly. Tom's trousers were gorgeously plaided and flared at the bottom. This imparted a certain rakishness, and there was also an undoubted air of prosperity in his general style.

The fiddles began to scrape. A flutter of expectancy filled the air. The White Bear Ditch ladies ogled the Sleepy Gulch ladies over their fans and flirted outrageously with the Sleepy Gulch men—so the Sleepy Gulch ladies affirmed. Close on to eight o'clock Tom Fenton slipped out and ran over to old Martin's. He knocked at the door and Mrs. Martin opened it.

"Oh, it's you, Tom, is it? I'm powerful glad ter see yer. Nance—she's completely upsot." Mrs. Martin's wiliness was unparalleled.

"No, I a'n't upsot, neither. I was a-goin along in jest erbout a minnit. I a'n't quite ready. You come in, Tom."

Nance's tone was a honeyed one. Tom's heart jumped. His dulcinea was putting the final touches to her frizzes, and Tom considered her the most glorious pink vision he had ever seen.

"Everybody's there, Nance."

"Everybody?" she answered, with a laugh. "How d' you make thet out? You an' I don't seem ter be there."

"I'm late. I hope you'll excuse me. That committee set me a-decoratin' with Miss Banks's posies, an' I thought I'd never get ter the last one. That committee a'n't got a mite of mercy. Ef yer don't up an' do every blessed thing they want yer to, you'll never hear the last on't. I run over the first minnit I could sneak off."

"Oh, you needn't apologize. I wa'n't ready until this blessed minnit."

The stars twinkled with a thousand lights, and the air was sweet with dewiness. As the gate clicked on its hinges, and then snapped decisively behind them, Tom determined to strike while the iron was hot. Bob might appear. It was now or never.

"Don't let's hurry, Nance. It's all-fired hot in there. I want ter ask yer somethin', Nance. I've been meanin' ter

put it before yer fer a long time. I want yer, Nance, the very worst way, an' I'll do ennything fer ye, if ye'll only take me——"

"I'll take yer, Tom. Come on, I want ter see who's come ter the ball." Nance spoke impatiently. "An' I want ter see that decoratin', too," the girl added more softly.

Mrs. Eastman was busy nursing the baby when Nance walked into the dressing-room. She laid the child down in the little row of babies belonging to five other giddy young matrons, and hugged Nance.

"I'm awful tickled," she said amiably. "I thought yer was a-goin' ter hev Bob, an' I was cranky. I ain't no faith in Bob's prospectin' powers." Then Mrs. Eastman's attention was absorbed once more by the youngest Eastman.

Tom pushed his advantage. Nance irritably promised to combine a wedding and Christmas festivities, and went home so dead tired from dancing, that she slept until one o'clock next day in that wonderful pink gown.

"Guess 'twill iron out," Nance murmured sleepily, realizing that she had crossed the Rubicon safely. The problem was solved.

Far up the cañons, amidst the dense green growth that everywhere sprung into life, silence brooded. The night-owls and coyotes were in possession. Towards the early morning hours, the moon sent a thousand flickering lights and silvery sparkles over the hills.

Bob Simpson stood on one of these hills leaning against a tree. His arms were pinioned closely to his sides with a lariat that was also deftly wound around the trunk and his body. His tormentor sat near by before a fire, replenished from time to time. Bob's pistols were slung at his waist and the barrels gleamed mockingly in the firelight. The Mexican sat sullenly, with folded arms. His mustang snorted and stamped under one of the trees in the cleared circle.

Bob had stopped swearing. After all it was of no particular consequence. He would be able to make everything straight with Nance Martin if he chose to. He would take her to the very next Great Bear Ditch ball. They would go in style. Nance was a nice girl, and perhaps he ought to settle down. Well, he might do it. He would see. He wondered what

sort of a ring she liked. Women fussed about these things.

The gray line in the east wavered and grew rosy with sun tintings. Then the Mexican arose and cut the lariat. In an instant he was out of sight and Bob listened to the thud of the mustang's hoofs with revenge in his heart.

The first Sleepy Gulch man he met told him that Tom Fenton was engaged to the belle of Sleepy Gulch. Then Bob cursed his luck, but promptly made up his mind that, after all, Sue Hooker knew a man when she saw one and was worth a dozen of Nance Martin.



REVERIE*

BY ALDIS DUNBAR



WO hundred years old! I heard them say so last night. Perhaps it may be true. How can I know how old I am—shut up for all those years? My memory is good, but I could not have kept track of time when my earthly part lay forgotten in an old scorched oaken box. Now that I have again taken my proper place in the world I shall be happier; yet I have already begun to hope that I may not be entirely parted from her, that some time her spirit may again

lift mine in her little hand——

That was a strange life and so different from the ever-changing one that went before it. Strange things and strange owners I have seen since the day when he, my creator, first laid me down and called me finished.

Surely I should be grateful that I am once more of use and can be near my fellows. Ah, it is true, I forget all those beautiful lonely years when I dream of the harmonies of many instruments, of my own tones, high above them all.

It is hard to realize that my constant companion for so many years is shattered and useless. Poor little bow, at least they had the grace to preserve you, in consideration of your age. What will I be without you? Another may draw out as sweet music, but another will not have shared my life. In the meantime I lie here and dream over what we saw and felt together, until I live again many scenes—now long passed.

I see again the old shop of Mynheer Van der Dael as it

*Written for Short Stories, with illustrations by Abby E. Underwood—Copyrighted.

was on the day when Hew Staunton entered it searching for a violin. Mynheer took me down and showed me to him



with much pride. I was in good condition and my strings were all in tune.

He took me in his hands carefully and gently, and examined me while Mynheer went for a bow. It was not hard for me to see that my "physical condition" was his main thought;—the beauty and grain of the finely varnished wood—rather than the fine proportions which

cost my artist-maker so much thought. Yet I was fascinated by him. He was so different from any master that I had ever had before.

He asked my price from Mynheer Jan, and assented to it without a murmur. At first I was astonished at this, for it was not the custom of men in those days. Had he been so impressed by me as to be willing to pay any price in order to possess me? His next words explained it.

"Now, Mynheer," he said, "show me a casket worthy to hold such a fair instrument. It is to be a present to a fairer lady, and I would have it fitly enclosed."

Mynheer opened his sharp old eyes at this, for in those days men would not believe it possible that a woman would make a serious study of the violin.

"Ah, my little Amati," he said to me as Hew bent to examine an antique harp, "I had hoped to send you out to a better service than that of being a fine lady's toy." He had spoken below his breath, but now he seemed to have taken a sudden resolution. "Mynheer Staunton!" He looked at him in surprise. "I cannot sell you this violin. I am sorry, but it is not possible. Go to Luigi Ferrati, if you wish. He has many for you to choose from, and he would sell you any one in his stock though he knew it would help to light a fire the next day. But I—I do not find it in me to send such a violin as this to be a plaything, a fine lady's bauble—to be cast aside for a cracked teapot or a curled lapdog. It cannot be."

"I have not asked you to do such a thing," Hew answered angrily. Then he laughed to himself. "A fine lady," I heard him say in English. He spoke louder again. "Hearken, Mynheer Van der Dael. You would have sold this violin to *me* for myself. Is it not so?" Mynheer bent his head without a word. "Then why need you hesitate about letting me buy it for my little cousin?" "But—a woman!" protested my owner.

"No, a girl," answered Hew, "but a girl who has mastered the art of music, as I shall never do. Mayhap, some day I shall win this violin to mine own possession again, if that will make you more willing to let it go to her."

"I understand;" Mynheer's eyes twinkled, "and I also see why you did not try to beat down my price. Well, you shall have it, on condition that you give me the name of its future owner, and promise to let me know if it is ever necessary for it to be sold."

"May that time never come," answered Hew.

They laid me by, and for a time I was forgotten, as they discussed the relative merits of certain inlaid boxes.

At last one was chosen,—a fair oaken box, with a wreath of violets carven on the lid; and with an ancient spring lock, concealed by a wreath fashioned of silver, which was sunk beneath the surface of the wood.

"It hath a strange trick, which you must teach your cousin,—that her music may not cease suddenly—one day—for want of her violin; it being locked fast from her. See now. When you would fasten it securely, you have but to turn this silver leaf until its tip touches the outer wood. This releases the spring. Then shut the box, and it cannot be opened until the leaf be returned to its former position, overlapping this violet."

As they placed me in the box, Mynheer Jan asked, "And your cousin's name?"

"Constantia Averil."—"Constantia! with her name the old shop fades from view, and Mynheer is forgotten.

The sunlight struck on me, as the lid of my casket was raised, and the soft wrappings were drawn aside.

She said not a word,—only looked at her companion with eyes full of happiness, as though an unexpected joy had come to her.

"Save your pretty smiles and raptures for Master Hew. I have no right to them, fair cousin." He spoke almost bitterly, as he raised me from the box.

"Will you always speak to me so harshly, Philip? It was not so when I was a child. Then, you praised and encouraged me,—helped me in my troubles, and never were angry, even when I distracted you from your work. Now, I can do nothing aright, and you mock at my honest pleasure. Of what use would this violin be to me, if you had not taught me to use it?"



There was no answer, but he tuned my strings until they vibrated with the perfect fifths. Then he placed me in the hands of my mistress. Such soft, slender little hands, but with a firm grasp that knew no faltering, as she raised me to her shoulder, and drew the bow across the strings.

Philip stood by the window, and watched her, as he listened to the quaint sarabande.

"Ah, how I love it already!" she exclaimed as she paused. "It is like a human being,—a new friend,—and one—" she glanced sadly towards Philip,——"who cannot wound me with unkind speeches."

"I unkind? It was not willful. Forgive me,—of your grace,—and show me that you have forgotten my discourtesy by playing this duet with me. Remember, sweetheart, I am no longer young, and put the blame on crabbed old age."

He seated himself at the spinet, and she laughed merrily.

"I forgive you with all my heart, but you have chosen a most melancholy pledge for me to give."

It was a sad little air, indeed, but it was summarily interrupted by a man's voice calling her name.

"It is Hew at last! He has come!" she exclaimed joyfully. She laid me down, and was gone before her companion could speak.

"And so it will be hereafter," he said, as he rose and came towards me. Old? His thick, black curls were sprinkled with gray, but his face, though worn, was not that of an old man. His dark eyes were singularly penetrating, though I could not tell their color. I trembled as I saw the look he gave me—and with reason; for he caught me up, and made a motion as though he would cast me at his feet.

But his mood suddenly changed, and as he laid me gently in my case, I heard him whisper—"I, Philip d'Aurigny, jealous again? Jealous of a violin? Surely it is enough that I—" but the sentence was not finished.

If he was jealous of me, it was soon my turn to be jealous,—of all who claimed her time and the attention that otherwise she gave to me.

Few indeed, among men, would believe that a violin—a mere piece of delicate carpentering—could feel human emotions. Yet, what musician will dare affirm that a violin, if worthy the name, has not a soul? In the hands of a master, even the poorest little machine-made imitation can reflect—though it be but faintly—the soul of the performer. As for those who, like myself, come from the hands of an artist, we have within us the possibility of retaining a part of that which we reflect. Each possessor gives us more, and as the years pass, the soul becomes more perfect. So it was that I loved my new mistress, and still love her, as I have never loved since my existence began.



The room that I knew best was a little one, hung with tapestry. A cosy little contrast it was to the great hall adjoining it, which was long, irregularly shaped, and gloomy, even when the flames rose in the large, open fireplace.

On the walls hung many portraits; some, clear and bright—others, shadowed by time. How thick those walls were—and are still—may be seen by noting how the windows are sunken in them, leaving space in plenty for the seats, half hidden by the heavy curtains. It has changed but little since I first saw it.

But at that time she cared more for the little tapestried room, where my box stood in one corner, and the spinet by the window, while the shelf was filled with old music books, and some almost priceless manuscripts given to her by Philip d'Aurigny.

Here he taught her all he knew of music and its science, while Hew often lounged in the window-seat, impatient for the end of the lesson; even while he knew that she played her best to him only. He, too, affected to envy me, but

with him it was an idle jest. I was selfish enough to wish that he would go away and never return; yet that would have made her unhappy—and she might have crushed me with her little foot, and welcome, if it would have given her a moment's pleasure. Another violin could easily be found, but not another violinist like her.



Cold winter weather it was, when Lady Cicely Herbert came to Averil house. The Christmas snow lay on the ground, and the holly berries were scarlet in the thickets.

She was tall and very fair. Beside her, Constantia Averil looked like a little gipsy. My mistress's short black curls were like silken floss, and her brown eyes shone as the stars in heaven, but she was only a child when

compared to this stately court lady, with her powdered hair, and pink and white skin.

Who could wonder at poor Hew? In all his travels he had not met any woman that could turn his heart from his little cousin—his promised wife. And now came one who had the power to bend him as she would.

To him, Constantia was a slender, dainty little fairy, whom he could catch up in his arms, and never feel her weight. Constantia looked up to him with love and admiration, no matter what he might do. But here was a princess, haughty and proud; for her smile he would have gone to the uttermost parts of the earth. I could see it all, but she was blind. How could she believe that Cicely was stealing Hew's heart away from her? Philip, too, watched it closely, and I know now that he did all he could to shield her from the knowledge. His unselfishness should have shamed me—though my feeling of relief, at Hew's absence from the lessons, was passive, and could not affect her.

There hangs her portrait still—there where the firelight shines. Would you not think that she was smiling, as she stands there, holding me in her hand? She will not come

to me to-night, with that smile in her eyes. So she looked the day that the picture was finished.

"You and I are immortalized now, my Amati. We will go down to remote ages together," and she laid me away for the night. For the last time, if I had only known it.

Throughout that night I knew naught of what was happening, except that I dreaded the opening of my box. It was Philip's face—stern and hard—that I saw, though only for a moment. As he folded me in a silken scarf, I heard him say: "She loved you and gave her life for you. Now no other shall ever possess you. Her portrait shall conceal you until you and it fall into dust. Would that I might share your fate." I was content.



How long did I lie there? I had no means of knowing. No sound penetrated to my prison—no light touched me, to let me know the difference between day and night. My companion, the bow, and I were resigned to our destiny, for she was dead, and we could not wish to pass into the hands of a stranger.

A strange vibrating thrill passed through me; a feeling as though I were being lifted up—drawn out of myself. Strange that I seemed to feel her soft little hands touching me. Was it a dream? Dream or reality, I saw the moonlight pouring in through the windows of the great hall, the portraits on the walls; and, strangest of all, I saw that I myself was still lying in the oaken box, in the closed recess behind the portrait of Constantia Averil.

And then—most strange and awful, and yet most full of joy—was the moment when I realized that I—my soul part—was held by the mistress whom I loved. Even death had not parted us. By that love she had drawn my spirit to be her companion.

She touched her lips to me, but said ne'er a word, as she



slowly walked from one end to the other of that great moonlit hall. At last she lifted me to her shoulder. I trembled as she drew the bow, but the music came forth, soft and clear; such tones as never a mortal could draw from a violin. Seated before the fire, with her own portrait looking down at her, she spoke: "My violin, my only friend in this loneliness. So you, too, have a soul that can love me. Do you know, I wonder how it is that I have only you to care for? You were shut in your case, and could see nothing.

"I *must* speak to you as though you could understand me. I believe that you can.

"I laid you in your sleeping place, *Amati mia* and slept myself until I was awakened by calls of 'Fire!' I dressed hurriedly and rushed down to the outer door, where all were standing. Hew, Cicely, my father and Philip.

'Where is it?' "I asked. Philip pointed to the rooms beyond my tapestried chamber. The smoke was pouring out from the windows, and I saw a little flame in the room that I loved. I thought of you, and without a word to any one, I hurried back up the stairway and through the great hall into my study, where the hangings were blazing. Your box was already scorched at one end, but I caught it up and turned back. As I passed the door a gust of wind filled the hall with smoke. It made me dizzy, for it seemed to have cut me off from my escape. I reached the nearest window. It was open. I looked out, and saw that they had just missed me. I called Hew; he looked up and saw me. I knew that he would save me. He spoke to Philip, pointing me out to him, and I saw them both rush toward the door. Suddenly Cicely caught Hew by the arm, and held him back. He tried to release himself, but she pointed to Philip—knelt to him—and he, he stayed at her side. That was the last thing that I knew. I saw that Hew cared for me no longer, and I was glad to die. But I loved music so well; and now I must stay here until an earthly life again claims me. My life was not completed. It will be lonely, but I shall have you, my *Amati*. I loved Hew, my father, Philip and you. Hew has already forgotten my love for him; my father thinks only of the last heir to his estates, and Philip looked on me

only as a troublesome child. You alone can be with me now." The fire had died away. I felt darkness envelop me, and I was again lying in my prison.

And now began a strange, new existence for me. All day long I lay and dreamed of her. At night I was with her as she paced along under the old portraits or sat before the dying embers. Sometimes she would stand at the window, and then I knew of what she was thinking, though she never spoke again of her death. It was a clear, warm spring night. Through the open windows came the breeze, bringing the scent of apple-blossoms; but it never stirred a fold of her white robe nor lifted a silken curl on her brow.

The silver-pure moonlight shone on her as she stood at the window, but it cast no shadow on the floor behind. She was playing that sad little air which I had heard first on the day I became hers. There was a sigh in the air. She turned. At her feet knelt Philip d'Aurigny! Her face was full of joy, which turned to infinite compassion as he silently lifted the hem of her dress to his lips. By that token I knew he was even as we were.



"Philip, have you come at last? I have been very lonely?"

Love transfigured his face as he rose and took her hand in his. How many years passed by? Had I ever lived any other life? It did not seem possible. Night after night her will brought me to her, and the heavenly harmonies filled the hall.

Then came a wild, stormy night. The wind whistled and roared in the mighty chimney, and the last sparks of the fire glowed. For a long time she stood gazing at them, and then she lifted her eyes and looked in his face. "I must go from you now, Philip, and you will be left here alone. Will you guard my violin till I come again?"

"No mortal shall touch it until you return to claim it," he answered sadly.

"Then that will be the sign by which you shall know me, though I may not know you. Farewell, my Amati; farewell,

Philip." She laid me in his hands. "Farewell." She was gone; whither, we knew not.

The time wore on. Very lonely and sad was my life now, though Philip took me from my prison every night. He waited until her coming for his release, as I did for mine.

"There is a change coming," he said to me one night. "I know not what it will be, but I feel it,—more to-night than ever before."

He was standing at Constantia's window when the door was thrown open, at the other end of the hall, and three people entered. Averil House had been almost deserted for many years, but at last its owners had come to it. Philip shrank back among the curtains as though they could have seen him. A white-haired man,—still tall and stately—stood before the glowing fire, which the housekeeper piled with fresh wood. The third person,—a young girl,—looked around with interest as she removed her outer wraps.

Even from the other end of the hall something about her drew and held my attention; and when she spoke an electric thrill passed through me as if from Philip's hands. "Have I never been here before, father?" she asked.

"No, my dear, never. Why do you ask?"

"Because this hall seems familiar, almost as if I had dreamed of it."

Sir William turned to her; his eyes fell on the portrait of my mistress, and he started visibly.

"Look, my dear, there is a picture that would almost give the lie to me, for it might be yourself stepping from the wall to greet us."

"Indeed, Sir William, it might be Miss Staunton herself, if she was in white and was holding a violin."

The young girl laughed. "I do play a violin, and I love it dearly. But whose picture is it? I do not dare to call it beautiful now that you both say it is like me."

"It must be Constantia Averil," answered Sir William Staunton. "Mrs. Thorne will tell you about her while I see whether the other carriage has come."

He left the room, and his daughter looked eagerly to the housekeeper.

"It's a sad story, Miss Cicely, but it's a short one. Sir Walter Averil was the last of his name here, and she was his

only daughter. She was the promised wife of her cousin, Hew Staunton, your great-grandfather, Miss Cicely. She was just your age when that picture was painted, and they say she played that violin like an angel, if angels ever play such like things. Her cousin sent it to her from foreign parts. It was just after the picture was finished that the wing beyond this hall caught fire, and some say it was in trying to save her violin that she was smothered by the smoke; but I once heard tell that Sir Hew would have saved her if Lady Cicely Herbert had not held him back. But there," apologetically, "she was your great-grandmother afterwards, and most likely she didn't want him to risk his life. However that might have been, they never lived here after that."

"What became of the violin?" Cicely asked.

"I can't say, Miss, but perhaps Sir William knows." Evidently the violin was of little importance to her.

Was Cicely Staunton walking in her sleep that night? She passed into the hall like a spirit and paused before the portrait. Had some strange sympathy drawn her there again? Philip trembled as he looked on her face. "Constantia!" he called, "is it you at last? Have you come to set me free?" But her eyes were closed and she answered not. "Will you not speak to me?" She could not have heard his pleading voice, for she passed away from him without a sign.

"She has brought my release at last. My sin was in loving her too well, too dearly; but it is the completion of my punishment that she did not know. I, too, must say 'farewell' to you, my only consolation. You will not have to wait many days before you will be with her again."

I was lying in my box dreaming of the future, when I heard a sudden noise and my casket was roughly dragged along the ground.

There was an indistinct sound of voices, exclamations—then silence. I heard hands working with the lock, ineffectually at first; but suddenly the cover was opened and the silken scarf thrown aside.



Were they *her* eyes that looked at me from the face of Cicely Staunton?

And now I shall again see the fair sunlight and the faces of mortals. My future may be bright and useful, but I know that at times the longing will return for the life that I have left forever—a longing for the gloomy hall with the moonlight streaming through the windows,—shining on her portrait.



THE BLIZZARD*

BY WM. J. BECK.

A blizzard upon the great plains! What a terrible thing! Snow in torrents! Winds rushing with mighty force! No well-cut road to guide your way—all an open sea before you and about you. Soon no east, no west, no north, no south. Your sight obscured—shut in. You strain your eyes to see through the tempest, but cannot. On you grope, not knowing whither. You hope, but are not assured; yet on you trudge. You find yourself crossing and recrossing your track. The gloom of despair begins to settle down upon your mind. You battle against it. Darkness, always dreadful, falls upon this awful scene and makes it more awful. It is colder. Your breath becomes icicles on your beard. A terrible chill grasps your limbs. Your brain reels. Still you battle; but it is of no avail. The last faint glimmer of hope fades from your mind. The drowsiness of death lays hold on you, and you sink into the snow to sleep, you think, but in reality to die.

The mules toil stoutly on. Now the sun, half veiled by shifting clouds and flying snow, peeps out; now hides his face. Each succeeding wave of wind seems but the fuller breath of the on-coming storm. The sun peeps out no more. The storm is on in all its fury. The last faint trace of road is gone. Instinct alone now guides the mules. Oftimes they stop and shake their heads; when encouraged by the master's voice from behind the wagon, they move on again. Still on they trudge, nor mules nor master knowing whither. "Ah, what's this! A new-made trail of freighters! Whoa! Not cross it—follow it. We're safe!" And hope grows within him, and again through the storm he sees wife and children. God rescue him, who, lost in tempest such as this, finds himself by finding his own track!

The morning broke with cloudless sky. In sight of home were found the mules. One lay prone upon the ground; the other, with braced legs and hanging head, stood motionless as a statue. In front of them lay their master—dead! They had made one circle more than he.

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THE WEDDING TOUR*

BY JULES SIMON

There are two kinds of professors in a university—at least this is true of the University of Paris—professors who aim to be something else and who are meanwhile the least enamored with their vocation, and those who are charmed with and proud of their calling, and who see no horizon beyond the class-room. I assure you the second are simpletons, while the first are downright fools; but the reader will at once inquire to which class I belonged. Put me down among the fools. I have long since passed into obscurity; not so M. Taupin, however.

We will call him M. Taupin among ourselves, and even those who were familiar with him did not address him otherwise.

“How do you do, M. Taupin?” “Very well,” he always replied, because he had robust health and an optimism still more robust than his health. I was at the time substitute for M. Cousin at the Sorbonne. M. Taupin pitied me for having only taken the college course. He was, however, my best friend.

We took a long walk together every day, after having dined at Flicoteaux' for seventy centimes.

One day he informed me that he could not dine with me on the morrow, as he had been invited to the home of one of his pupils. This was something new. I tried to find out the name, but he replied by circumlocution. I offered a few pleasantries, which were coldly received.

“What is the matter with him?” said I to myself. I could not get him off my mind during my promenade, solitary for the first time.

The day after the important visit he appeared at Flicoteaux' in gloves which cost twenty-nine sous, snowy linen, and shining boots. He noticed my extreme astonishment.

“Well, yes,” he said, blushing to his ears; “I will tell you about it during our walk.”

*Translated from the French by H. Twitchell for Short Stories—Copyrighted.

He did not say a word during the meal; and as for me, I could find no topic for conversation.

"He is going to get married," thought I, "but how could such a thing be brought about?"

I could not imagine him addressing a word to a woman other than the mother of a pupil.

Pupils have sisters, however, as well as mothers. He tutored Mlle. Guibouret, and for friendship's sake, too. Mme. Guibouret could barely support herself and her two children with the pension given her by the vestrymen of Saint Sulpice, where her husband had been choirmaster. The two women were profoundly grateful at first, and ended by becoming attached to him. No one could know him intimately without loving him for his goodness.

I would have sworn that Mlle. Guibouret had made some advances, for he was incapable of looking at her without previous encouragement.

She was a very good musician, being a choirmaster's daughter; and—a surprising thing for a grammarian—he was a fine performer on the violoncello. I suppose they played duets, and in consequence they were going to get married.

Their future looked so rose-colored that they thought they would take a wedding tour. Mme. Guibouret disapproved and raised all sorts of objections. They were going to commence foolishly; M. Taupin would have to get a leave of absence, and so on. They had an answer for them all, however. He could get off for three days, and they would stop at the very smallest hotel. It was to be their first and last frivolity. It was finally decided that they were to sojourn three days in Rouen. I leave you to imagine the delights of the journey. They had never before been together for so long a time; they had never before traveled such a distance, so their source of pleasure was twofold.

They arrived at their journey's end at nightfall and were escorted through a labyrinth of narrow streets to a small hotel.

They had breakfasted heartily at Paris to save buying dinner. It was only eight o'clock. They wished to see the town. Where were the splendid buildings? The beautiful shops? They were told to go to the Boieldieu Wnari, and return by the Palais de Justice, which at night looked like fairyland.

"You must dress up a little," said Léonie.

She took the necessary articles from their valise, and, handing them to Taupin, said:

"Shave yourself quickly; I cannot endure a rough face."

To his dire dismay he found he had forgotten his razor.

"Run out to a barber-shop, and hurry," was his wife's command.

He rushed out, after asking where a shop was to be found.

The other guests smiled at this Parisian who wanted to get shaved at eight o'clock at night, and on Tuesday, too. Tuesday is not shaving day in Rouen for the patrons of this hotel. They get their beards cut on Sunday, and if rich enough again on Wednesday. However, they gave him the information he desired.

"Turn to the right, again to the right, then to the left. It is one of the first houses then to your left."

The direction was not any too clear to his mind; but he said to himself: "I shall see the sign."

The sign? If there is no other sign, there will at least be the brass tray swinging before the door. The distance was longer than he thought it would be; but at last he saw the "tray" creaking on its rod as the wind blew it back and forth. He reached the shop. It was locked. What a mischance! He looked for the bell, for the porter. No porter. There are no porters in Rouen outside of the new parts of the town. No bell. He rapped; no one came. He kept on. A policeman was around.

"What are you doing there?"

"You can see. I want to get in to get shaved."

"You will not get in. You will not get shaved. Go home to bed."

"Ah, but——"

"Don't hesitate. You are a suspicious character, young man; and if you keep up a disturbance, I shall arrest you."

M. Taupin, seeing himself in a dangerous position, politely removed his hat and explained his situation and desires to the policeman, who listened.

"Sir," said the representative of the law, "these small barbers shave customers only in the morning. I will conduct you to a hairdresser's."

It was done. Never before had our friend been cared for

in such dainty yet luxuriant fashion. Mirrors, lights everywhere. Marble tables and elegant chairs to recline upon; snowy linen. When he looked into the mirror after the operation, he smiled with satisfaction at the image he saw reflected. He paid the twenty sous they charged him almost joyfully, and went away on the run to join his dear Léonie. He was hastening along, a prey to hopes and fears—hopes for the kisses which were awaiting him, fears for the reproaches for his long absence—when another thought caused him to halt suddenly.

“Am I going in the right direction?”

He looked around. He was in a narrow street, dimly lighted by two widely-removed lamps which threw out a fitful glare; no shops, no passers-by. He had the sensation of being lost in a labyrinth. He must, above all, get out of this gloom. He retraced his steps, feeling sure he would soon find the illuminated Grand Place he had just left; but he soon saw that he was walking at random. In the distance he heard the half hour strike; then, after an age, the three-quarters.

“It is nearly nine o'clock. What will become of her? What will she think?”

In an instant all the horrors of the situation flashed upon him. How was he to find an inn of which he did not know the name; an inn, too, of the most insignificant kind in a city like Rouen. He did not even know the name of the street, or alley rather, on which it was situated; to be sure, it could be done all right in the morning through the assistance of the police. But till to-morrow was an eternity. To leave that dear child a prey to so much anxiety for so long a time, in a lonesome place, and on the very day of her wedding was enough to drive him crazy. He thought and thought; while running he felt his senses deserting him.

Finally he heard footsteps in the lonesome streets; he saw a figure approaching, but just as he was about to hail it, it disappeared in a cross street. He followed it at all hazards.

“Mister,” cried he at the top of his voice; “Mister, I am lost. I beg you to help me find my way. Mister! Mister!”

He thought that if he were being murdered or robbed, his call for help would have done him no good. The man walked rapidly along as if he wished to get away from a drunken man or a thief.

I can do no better than to follow him, thought Taupin. "At least, I shall not go through the same streets again." He was right. He soon emerged from the shadows into the dazzling light. He was at the entrance of the Grand Theatre. Here were people at last!

He had a momentary feeling of joy but soon his anxiety returned. He knew neither the name of his hotel nor the name of the street. When he started out, he thought he had not more than fifty steps to go. The idea that one could get lost at night in a city like Rouen never entered his head. Perhaps his host had given him his card when he met him at the station, and he feverishly searched his pockets. Nothing! A little purse containing forty francs (he had had eighty, but taking wise precautions against pickpockets, he had given Léonie half), the blank he used for his class notes, a guide book, that was all. What was he to do? He peered into the faces of the passers-by, hoping to see a kind, obliging countenance to which he could appeal for advice. He checked himself when about to address one because of a gesture or a look which seemed to him unfavorable.

Finally plucking up courage he said. "Sir," to an old man with a benevolent expression; but the old man drew away, and disdainfully tossed him a penny.

"I do not ask alms, sir; I am no beggar. I am a professor!"

In vain. The man, perhaps ashamed himself, hurried away.

Dazed by his recent adventure, with his head in a whirl, Taupin sat down on a curbstone to reflect. To find his hotel without knowing its name was an impossibility. How could that name be found? There were only five or six carriages at the station on his arrival and five or six men to secure patrons for their hotels. To find the name of those houses among which would be his own, would be all he could do. He would take a policeman and go from door to door until he should succeed. He would cover that officer with gold. There was no longer any thought of economy. Léonie's suspense must not be prolonged.

He felt relieved as soon as this decision was reached. He felt sure of success. He must have been crazy to worry. One does not lose one's self in a city like Rouen. There are policemen who know all the public houses. The first step,

then, would be to find one. There was one coming now, who patrolled in front of the theatre. Taupin took off his hat, bowed politely, and said:

"Sir!"

He stopped short on recognizing the officer who had conducted him to the hairdresser's. What a fortunate encounter! The man in his turn recognized him.

"You, again?" was his first remark, in a not very conciliatory tone.

"Yes, it is I; and you have the power to be of great service to me."

He commenced to tell his story; but he made such incoherent statements, and mixed things up so, that it was impossible to make anything out of it.

"I seem like a drunken man," he said; and the officer had just about arrived at the same conclusion.

"You may make your explanations at the station," said the policeman, grasping him by the collar of his coat.

"At the police station, like a vagabond or a thief!"

The officer tried to lead him away. He resisted, poor, little man.

"You have no right to arrest me," cried he. "I have committed no offense. I am no vagrant. I have an honorable profession, as I can prove. I have money in my pocket, too. All my trouble comes from my not being able to find the hotel where I put up. It is your business to assist instead of insulting me."

He was really eloquent, he told me afterwards. The crowd, which had gathered around, cried out:

"Take him to M. Dauphin! Take him to M. Dauphin!"

"Yes, take me to M. Dauphin! Who can he be?" thought he to himself. "He must be the chief."

Taupin was shown into the presence of M. Dauphin, who proved to be the officer on special duty at the theatre.

By this time, Taupin's ideas had arranged themselves in order, and he expressed himself clearly and to the point. He found himself listened to. He was elated at the thought of success.

"Sir," said the policeman, after letting him talk as long as he wished, and examining the contents of his pockets, "I believe you."

At this, Taupin grasped his hands in gratitude.

"I believe you, but that does not make your case any the less difficult to manage. It will be an affair of only twenty-four hours," he added, seeing Taupin's look of alarm. "To-morrow, with the aid of the police, we will surely find Mme. Taupin. What you had better do to-night——"

At this point he was interrupted by a great clamor in the corridor. The door was thrown open, and several voices cried all at once:

"M. Dauphin! M. Dauphin! the manager wants you at once."

"Wait till I return," said M. Dauphin, starting off on the run. He was absent only a few minutes, when he returned in an excited state.

"How unfortunate," said he. "A musician who was to play a solo in the fourth act is unable to appear. A Rouennais audience does not brook disappointment. I must go to pacify them. Here is my address; come to me to-morrow and we will arrange everything."

"I thought I saw everything escaping from me," Taupin told me afterwards, "when a happy thought struck me."

"A musician? What musician? What instrument?"

"A violoncello."

"Sir," said Taupin, with suppressed emotion, "I am a violoncellist of some merit. If I could save the performance——"

They did not allow him to finish. He was hurried off to the manager's office, where an instrument was thrust into his hands. He surpassed himself. At the end of a few measures, the director stopped him.

"How much shall I pay you?"

"I do not want any money, but if this officer will do this evening what he has promised to do for me to-morrow, I am ready to play all and as much as you desire."

"I cannot promise that I will succeed," replied M. Dauphin, "but I give you my word of honor that I will spare no pains to-night. To-morrow, success will be certain."

In an instant, Taupin felt himself hurried along and installed as soloist on a platform elevated above the others. The musicians crowded around and wished him success. He was moved at hearing himself addressed by his own name; there was no time for thought, as the three knocks had already been given (the signal for the raising of the curtain),

and from that moment he belonged body and soul to his score. His solo was fine. He finished with a superb *maestria*.

"I thought of Léonie," he said to me later, when relating his adventures.

He was loudly applauded. The violinists struck their bows upon their music racks. The audience cried "*bis!*" with frenzy.

"Ah, if you desire an engagement, M. Taupin," said the manager, "here is an opportunity."

These words brought to his mind the sad reality.

"The three men whom I have sent out have discovered nothing," said M. Dauphin.

"Try to sleep to-night. Come to my bureau to-morrow morning before time for opening. I shall be there expressly for you, and will conduct you to Mme. Taupin."

He paid dearly for a night's lodging at a large hotel. It may well be understood that he never closed his eyes in sleep.

At six o'clock he was at the Chief's office. When M. Dauphin arrived, he rushed upon him.

"A little patience," said that officer. "I have just dispatched a messenger to the central office; I have to await his return."

The agent arrived about eight o'clock.

"Well?" said Taupin. "You put up," said the agent, consulting his notes, "at the Hotel de la Belle-Pomme-Normande in the Rue des Verderettes. It is a long distance from here. Do you wish to take a carriage?"

"Of course."

"I will accompany you."

They threaded a network of streets which seemed to our good friend of an interminable length. On the way the officer called a newsboy and bought a morning paper; he ran his eyes over it, passed it to Taupin, and said:

"Read that."

"I am in no mood for reading papers," was the reply.

"How foolish you are. You are about to see her again. Read that, I say."

Taupin cast a mechanical glance at the sheet, and saw at the head of a column, in large type,

M. TAUPIN AT THE GRAND THEATRE OF ROUEN.

"How scandalous," said he, "but there are many Taupins in the world. How did they find out my name, my dear sir?"

"The manager announced you while you were going to your stand. He even said that you were a professor of a great school in Paris. I blame him for that."

Taupin dropped his head with a dejected air.

"I am lost," he said; "I shall be dismissed."

By this time they were at the door of the Belle-Pomme Normande.

"My wife! where is my wife?"

"She is gone, sir; and it is a good thing that she is spared seeing you brought back by the police."

"You do not mean to say that my wife has left me; what have you said to her; what have you done to her?"

It took two men to hold him. The landlady, almost as excited as himself, cried out:

"Leaving your wife to go to the theatre. On her wedding-day, too! It was I that advised her to go. I did not need to tell her, though. Any woman would have gone."

M. Dauphin had difficulty in keeping the peace. Finally he succeeded in making himself listened to, while poor Taupin sank down on an old bench in a fainting condition.

His explanation brought forth nothing but derision at first, but at last the woman was moved to pity. She regarded M. Taupin as the hero of a romance.

"Never mind! Never mind! Everything will be all right when she knows the truth. Poor little woman! Poor injured man!"

Taupin insisted upon taking the first train, in spite of the advice of the policeman and the landlady, who feared that in his condition he would never reach Paris. He went! Such a journey! He arrived! Such a home-coming! He found his apartments in their bachelor conditions. Everything which belonged to Léonie had disappeared. On his dressing-table was a sealed envelope containing only these words: "Good-by, forever, LÉONIE!"

I naturally was entrusted with the rôle of peace-maker. I had difficulty in gaining admittance to the house of Mme. Guibouret. When I at last succeeded, I saw that there had been great mourning.

I said to Léonie: "How could you be so cruel? You might have known that some accident had befallen him."

I learned that after passing a night full of the greatest anxiety, she had gone out in the morning with the hostess to get the police to aid her in finding her lost husband; that the first thing she heard, after starting, was his name shouted out by newsboys as the attraction of the morning. Buying a paper she read of his performing at the theatre; of his fine touch, his execution by turns brilliant and impassioned.

"All that," she added, "while I was dying with fear and despair."

I finally made myself listened to, and after long-continued efforts was believed. Mme. Guibouret was the first to relent and the younger woman's heart at last triumphed over her anger, so that I conducted her laughing and weeping to the Rue Madame, where Taupin was awaiting us more dead than alive.

Their joy was so great, and they found such large recompense for their trouble, that the day was a red-letter one, and M. Taupin never fails to say, when locating an event of the past: "It took place a short time after my delightful wedding tour."

He is now at the head of one of the first Lyceums of Paris. I beg you to believe that when he takes his outing in the month of September at Luchon or Biarritz, he never forgets to take a pair of elegant razors.



AIMÉE*

BY GEORGE W. ELLIS

SEPTEMBER 17th, 1793.

La Force.

Friends of the Faubourg St. Germain: You would be grieved if you could see me now as I sit writing to you by the dim light of a feeble candle.

Does it shock you, this heading of mine, that stares so boldly in your startled eyes from the top of the page? Does it say that I am disgraced, and do you believe it? If so pardon me for the sake of old times and old friendships. But in the old times the King ruled, and we sang "O Richard, O mon Roi!" But now the people, gone mad, must have their say, and we must suffer and endure and listen to them sing "Ça Ira".

You would ask how came I here. When I have answered, you will say, what a fool to have gone back. Just so. Yet listen.

You know that when the rest of us fled my brother remained behind. He had done much for the people and trusted to their gratitude. You cry out, how foolish. Exactly. He thought they would not harm him. He was mistaken. They would have torn a dog to pieces if it had borne my name.

They seized and condemned him to death. I heard of his imprisonment and went back to save him. It was unjust that he should suffer for my sins. I came too late. From a sheltering doorstep I saw the mad mob rush past me and in their midst, on a pike held high in the air, was my brother's head. I tried to get across the frontier and escape, hiding



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in the woods and under dunghills by day, and dragging myself along the road by night, living on the refuse that dogs would not eat. In vain. I was discovered by a vile ditch-digger from Rouen, who, meeting me on the road, recognized me; and, urged to patriotism by the remembrance of what he was pleased to call his daughter's wrongs, he *chases himself* to the village and reports his discovery, and so this worthy patriot, with a score of equally worthy patriots, lies in wait and seizes me as I stagger wearily along.

The peasants have become virtuous, my friends, or desire to appear so, and have tenacious memories for former trifles that were better forgotten. A strange time is this when the people are become hypocrites and we nobles, in sackcloth and ashes, pose for martyrs.

They placed me in charge of an escort armed with pikes and old muskets, and sent me off to Paris to the court of condemnation. I could tell you of things that I saw *en route* that would make your blood run cold, but I spare you. Apropos, this word of warning. If you value your heads keep away from here, for the people are gone mad and our blood flows freer in the present than ever did our wine in the past.

To make a long story short, we reached Paris the next morning, and my trial came off without delay. When my worthy friend, the patriot from Rouen, told how he knew me, and ended up his remarks with a burst of tears, it was all over with me. The galleries howled and stormed: "Down, Lamoutte, down! to the guillotine, Lamoutte!" You should have heard them!

The Judge rang his bell and the jurors voted separately, and at every vote the galleries roared anew. *Decreed in the name of the Republic, One and Indivisible:—The prisoner is an enemy of the people. Back to La Force with him, and death within the week.* Dogs!

Picture to yourself a long, low hall with hard, wooden



benches nailed to the stone walls, long, narrow windows with great iron gratings hardly admitting a ray of light. This is our prison—I say ours for there are some six score of us altogether. Fair-haired girls and grandmothers, courtiers, nobles, all are represented.

The whole company rose and bowed to me as the jailer thrust me into the room and a tall, elegantly formed man with white hair and a face like a Greek philosopher stepped forward.

"May I ask," said he, bowing most courteously, "to what cause we owe the pleasure of your company?"

"The Republic is displeased with its humble servant."

He smiled quietly. "It is a breach of good manners that needs correcting; we are all, I fear, sufferers from the same rudeness," was his comment. There was a laugh. He then asked my name and condition with the remark that it would be rude, if made elsewhere, but the time and place permitted it. My reply was evidently satisfactory, for he turned to the others and said:

"This gentleman, the Marquis of Lamoutte, has had the good fortune to be sent among us for a short time, and I hope you will all strive to make his stay as pleasant as possible. And you, Monsiur, will, I hope, take part in all of our gayeties and be cheerful and entertaining, forgetting your own misfortunes and striving to make others forget theirs. This is the only duty required of you." He then took me by the hand and led me around the circle introducing me to all in the room.

What astonished me most was the perfect composure and even gayety pervading all their actions. I hardly noticed an anxious look or a nervous movement among them, yet, like myself, they are all condemned to death.

There is one person to whom I am quite attracted, a sweet, young girl of some twenty years, with long, brown hair



and very dark blue eyes. I imagine I hear you laugh—"Up to the old tricks again," you say. You are mistaken. This is not the time nor place. Man goes to his death better than he goes through life.

SEPTEMBER 18th.

Our life here is a constant round of theatrical entertainments, readings, game playing, and even dancing. Anything to make the time pass quickly, and keep our minds from the thoughts of what the future has in store for us all. Last night we had a little play, written by Madame Duron, which was well presented by the Dramatic Club. You would be surprised to have seen how well the parts were taken. We are to have another performance to-night. If it were not for the gloomy surroundings, wooden benches and cold stone walls, with their little windows, you would think to see us that we are attending a levee at the Tuileries. Our clothes are somewhat in need of repairing and brushing, but our manners are, as ever, correct.

The count and I have become quite friendly since he took me in charge yesterday. He commanded the French guard at the palace on the 10th of August—his accounts of the affair are most interesting. I asked him, if, in his opinion, the king could have crushed the revolution, if he had placed himself at the head of the Swiss and other faithful troops. He shook his head. "It might have been; there was every chance of succeeding. Even if the king had trusted Dumorriez, all would have been well, but the king was weak, pitifully weak. Poor Louis, he was a good man, but the hand of Fate was against him, and all he could do was to die as a king should."

"I cannot see," I said, "how you bear yourself so calmly amid such scenes as these about us, for you always appear gay as if there was naught but happiness in the world." He looked at me keenly, and an amused smile lighted up his features. "My dear marquis," he said placing his arm in mine, as we began to walk towards the end of the room, "a man should forget himself in times like these, and live only for others. I have faced death too often in the service of my king to fear it now when I am in the service of my fellow men. There are frail girls and weak women here and I strive to make them forget that there is such a thing as to-morrow, but teach them to live only in the present. And

they are willing to laugh at anything that they may forget to weep." He is a true and noble man, this count; if I were a Christian I would say: "God bless him!"

After the play last night I danced the minuet with the little girl I spoke of in yesterday's entry. Her name is Aimée Dumont, and she is of Provence.

"Monsieur," she said, when we had taken our places for the dance, "you are from Provence, are you not?"

"I have that pleasure," I replied.

"And may I ask if you are a relative of Richard Lamoutte?"

"We are one and the same person."

Her eyes met mine and I saw in them a look almost of hate, and certainly full of scorn. She lowered them immediately, and said sarcastically:

"I have heard of you before."

"You might add that you have never heard any good of me; that would have been nearer what you really meant."

"I have heard, Monsieur, that you took advantage of the laws—and that only recently. It was a cruel thing to do and one that has caused much bloodshed and hatred in this poor country." She had continued to keep her eyes upon the floor, but suddenly looking up into my face, added, "I hope they slandered you, Monsieur."

I meant to say they had, but those deep eyes fixed full upon me, made me hesitate.

"Alas, Mademoiselle, it is but too true."

"And did you tell the starving people who came to you,



that you cared not whether they lived or died, as long as they paid the *taille*; I heard this told of you, too."

I had recovered myself somewhat, and answered meekly, as if I were one bitterly wronged:

"In that they slandered me. I was sorry to see them dying, but what could I do? They hated and would not trust me. I did all in my power, and yet they would have torn me to pieces last year had I not escaped."

She folded her hands before her, and leaned forward with upturned face, as if interested.

"Why, then, did you return, if you were in safety?" she asked.

My voice trembled at the memory of that dreadful scene at Rouen, and she noticed it, for she looked at me as if astonished at my show of feeling, and her face seemed kindlier.

"I had a brother who was in their hands. I came back to save him, to give myself up if need be to their vengeance, if they would spare him."

"And you saw him?"

"He was dead, Mademoiselle. I had come too late."

Just then the dancing began, but I noticed that she kept glancing at me continually throughout the dance. After we had finished, she bade me good-night without another word, and went down to the other end of the corridor singing the old Royalist refrain,

"O, Richard, O mon Roi, l'univers t'abandonne."

SEPTEMBER 20TH.

O Sleep, thou that comest to us in the silence of the night, bearing to the heart weary of toil and of vain struggle a certain rest and quiet from daily temptations, thou that art a sign and promise of a deeper and everlasting peace that shall be ours when the curtain falls upon the comedy of our vanity and folly, how hast thou betrayed me! Through all the night hast thou been summoning before me the phantoms of past misdeeds, and hast awaked to resurrection the voice of a conscience long slumbering. But yet there has been this alleviation for thy betrayal; for through the blackness of these shadows, thy face, O Aimée, shines upon me, and I hear thy voice singing softly,

"O Richard, O mon Roi."

Burdened with such fancies I could not sleep, so I walked

up and down the room to rid myself of this vague feeling of unrest. I had been walking perhaps a half-hour when, as I approached the lower end of the hall, I heard some one call me. Turning around I found myself face to face with Mademoiselle.

"You are restless to-night, Monsieur, or is it the cold?"

"The cold surely; are you suffering from the same cause?"

She looked down shyly and her voice was grave when she answered, "Yes, Monsieur, but a little nervous too. You know I go to-morrow."

I nodded thoughtfully. She sat down on the bench just under the window and motioned me to sit beside her.

"May I ask you a question, Monsieur?"

"Whatever you wish."

She leaned forward, resting her head on her hand.

"Have you any brothers or sisters or parents living, Monsieur?"

"No; they are all dead."

"And have you no wife nor children who will miss you?"

"No, I am all alone. There will be few to care, thank God."

She looked up suddenly, her hand on my knee

"Hush, Monsieur! That word is never spoken here but in jest." Her voice grew wistful, I thought, from eagerness. "Are you a Christian, Monsieur, may I ask?" "No, Mademoiselle." "I am so sorry." Her voice quivered, seemed almost sad.

"Will you over there on the bench keep still? Pity a man can't sleep in peace, and the last night, too. Go to sleep, you, or keep still."

It was the querulous voice of old Hulot, the Farmer-General, one of the morrow's victims. We spoke no more but sat waiting for daylight. Only once she leaned over and whispered:

"Monsieur, you will forgive me for what I said the other night? I am sorry."



I pressed her hand gently and we both were still. A little later she fell asleep, her head sinking upon my shoulder. I took off my coat and wrapped it around her, then leaned back against the wall to wait for the dawn. "To-morrow," thought I, looking down upon that fair, sweet face, "she will be far from here. She will have reached the goal." The voice of some one speaking aroused me. It was the Count; he too was restless.

"So Cupid has squeezed in even here," he said gallantly, placing his hand over his heart and bowing mockingly to me. "She is asleep," I said; "speak softly." He came a little nearer and looked down into her face. There was a real kindness and tenderness in his voice when he again spoke. "Poor little girl. How much the Republic would suffer if she lived. Don't move," he said, as I shifted my position; "let her sleep; the time flies swifter and the agony of suspense will be the shorter. She goes to-morrow, does she not?" I nodded. "By the way," he added, "I shall have the pleasure of your company the day after. The jailer told me last night." He bent over and kissed her hand like the old Chevalier that he was, and with a "Bon soir, Monsieur," he turned and walked away.

The night seemed very long. I dared not move lest I should wake her, so I sat still and waited. Her fair young head with its wealth of long, brown hair rested quietly on my shoulder. Her breath came regular and soft.



It must have been almost morning when she awoke "Have you been awake all night?" she said, looking up into my face. I nodded. "And you are shivering with cold, and have wrapped me in your cloak to keep me warm; you are very kind, I can never repay you. "You owe me just one thing," I replied; "you will let me kiss you." She smiled and hesitated. "Monsieur you may, just once."

It was eight o'clock when the jailer came and called out the names of those set apart for the day. I stood beside

her when her name was read, and she never winced. There was the usual silent grasp of the hand as friend parted from friend; sometimes a last kiss was given and taken as they went to their places against the wall.

She came back to me when she had gone the rounds. "It is time to say good-bye," she said.

I nodded, not daring to trust my voice.

She looked full in my face when I did not answer. She must have read my thoughts. "Did you care for me so much?" There was a pause——

"Monsieur, you may kiss me just once more."

There was the rumbling of the tumbrils in the court below; the harsh, monotonous voice of the jailer calling out the names of the doomed as they passed separately through the gate. A last lingering pressure of the hand and she goes. The heavy gate swung back upon its hinges, and I see her no more, shall never see her again in all this world, never. The tumbrils creak and rumble as they pass through the street. I listen until the rumbling dies away in the distance. Farewell!

This to Eugène Saint Aubert, of Co'lonce, by the Jailer Fourmaire. Let him be rewarded.



THE OLD GENTLEMAN'S TEETOTUM*

FAMOUS STORY SERIES.

At the foot of the long range of the Mendip hills, standeth a village, which, for obvious reasons, we shall conceal the precise locality of, by bestowing thereon the appellation of Stockwell. It lieth in a nook, or indentation, of the mountain; and its population may be said, in more than one sense of the word, to be extremely dense, being confined within narrow limits by rocky and sterile ground, and a brawling stream, which ever and anon assumes the aspect of an impetuous river, and then dwindles away into a plaything for the little boys to hop over. The principal trade of the Stockwellites is in coals, which certain of the industrious operative natives sedulously employ themselves in extracting from our mother earth, while others are engaged in conveying the "black diamonds" to various adjacent towns, in carts of sundry shapes and dimensions. The horses engaged in this traffic are of the Rosinante species, and, too often, literally raw-boned; insomuch, that it is a grievous sight to see them tugging, and a woful thing to hear their masters swearing, when mounting a steep ascent with one of the aforesaid loads.

Wherever a civilized people dwell, there must be trade; and, consequently, Stockwell hath its various artisans, who ply, each in his vocation, to supply the wants of others; and, moreover, it hath its inn, or public house, a place of no small importance, having for its sign a swinging, creaking board, whereon is emblazoned the effigy of a roaring, red, and rampant Lion. High, towering above the said Lion, are the branches of a solitary elm, the foot of which is encircled by a seat, especially convenient for those guests whose taste it is to "blow a cloud" in the open air; and it is of two individuals, who were much given thereon to enjoy their *otium cum dignitate*, that we are about to speak.

George Syms had long enjoyed a monopoly in the shoe-making and cobbling line (though latterly two oppositionists

* Printed anonymously in Blackwood's Magazine in 1829.

had started against him), and Peter Brown was a man well-to-do in the world, being "the man wot" shod the raw-boned horses before mentioned, "him and his father, and grandfather," as the parish-clerk said, "for time immemorial." These two worthies were regaling themselves, as was their wonted custom, each with his pint, upon a small table, which was placed, for their accommodation, before the said bench. It was a fine evening in the last autumn; and we could say a great deal about the beautiful tints which the beams of the setting sun shed upon the hills' side, and undulating distant outline, and how the clouds appeared of a fiery red, and, anon, of a pale yellow, had we leisure for description; but neither George Symms nor Peter Brown heeded these matters, and our present business is with them.

They had discussed all the village news—the last half of the last pipe had been puffed in silence, and they were reduced to the dilemma wherein many a brace of intimate friends have found themselves—they had nothing to talk about. Each had observed three times that it was very hot, and each had responded three times—"Yes, it is." They were at a perfect standstill—they shook out the ashes from their pipes, and yawned simultaneously. They felt that indulgence, however grateful, is apt to cloy, even under the elm-tree, and the red rampant lion. But, as Doctor Watts says,

Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do,

and they agreed to have "another pint," which Sally, who was ever ready at their bidding, brought forthwith, and then they endeavored to rally; but the effort was vain—the thread of conversation was broken, and they could not connect it, and so they sipped and yawned, till Peter Brown observed, "It is getting dark." "Ay," replied George Symms.

At this moment an elderly stranger, of a shabby-genteel appearance, approached the Lion, and inquired the road to an adjoining village. "You are late, sir," said George Symms.—"Yes," replied the stranger, "I am;" and he threw himself on the bench, and took off his hat, and wiped his forehead, and observed that it was very sultry, and he was quite tired.—"This is a good house," said Peter Brown; "and if you are not obliged to go on, I wouldn't if I were you."—"It makes little difference to me," replied the

stranger; "and so, as I find myself in good company, here goes!" and he began to call about him, notwithstanding his shabby appearance, with the air of one who has money in his pocket to pay his way.—"Three make good company," observed Peter Brown.—"Ay, ay," said the stranger. "Holla there! bring me another pint! This walk has made me confoundedly thirsty. You may as well make it a pot—and be quick!"

Messrs. Brown and Syms were greatly pleased with this additional guest at their symposium; and the trio sat and talked of the wind, and the weather, and the roads, and the coal trade, and drank and smoked to their hearts' content, till again time began to hang heavy, and then the stranger asked the two friends if ever they played at teetotum.—"Play at what?" asked Peter Brown.—"Play at what?" inquired George Syms.—"At tee-to-tum," replied the stranger, gravely taking a pair of spectacles from one pocket of his waistcoat, and the machine in question from the other. "It is an excellent game, I assure you. Rare sport, my masters!" and he forthwith began to spin his teetotum upon the table, to the no small diversion of George Syms and Peter Brown, who opined that the potent ale of the ramping Red Lion had done its office. "Only see how the little fellow runs about!" cried the stranger, in apparent ecstasy. "Holla, there! Bring a lantern! There he goes, round and round—and now he's asleep—and now he begins to reel—wobble—down he tumbles! What color, for a shilling?"—"I don't understand the game," said Peter Brown,—"Nor I, neither," quoth George Syms; "but it seems easy enough to learn."—"Oh, ho!" said the stranger; "you think so, do you? But, let me tell you, that there's a great deal more in it than you imagine. There he is, you see, with as many sides as a modern politician, and as many colors as an Algerine. Come, let us have a game! This is the way!" and he again set the teetotum in motion, and capered about in exceeding glee.—"He, he, he!" uttered George Syms; and "Ha, ha, ha!" exclaimed Peter Brown; and, being wonderfully tickled with the oddity of the thing, they were easily persuaded by the stranger just to take a game together for five minutes, while he stood by as umpire, with a stop-watch in his hand.

Nothing can be much easier than spinning a teetotum, yet

our two Stockwellites could scarcely manage the thing for laughing; but the stranger stood by, with spectacles on nose, looking alternately at his watch and the table, with as much serious interest as though he had been witnessing, and was bound to furnish, a report of a prize-fight, or a debate in the House of Commons.

When precisely five minutes had elapsed, although it was Peter Brown's spin, and the teetotum was yet going its rounds, and George Syms had called out yellow, the old gentleman demurely took it from the table and put it in his pocket; and then, returning his watch to his fob, walked away into the Red Lion, without saying so much as good-night. The two friends looked at each other in surprise, and then indulged in a very loud and hearty fit of laughter; and then paid their reckoning, and went away, exceedingly merry, which they would not have been had they understood properly what they had been doing.

In the meanwhile the stranger had entered the house, and began to be "very funny" with Mrs. Philpot, the landlady of the Red Lion, and Sally, the purveyor of beer to the guests thereof; and he found it not very difficult to persuade them likewise to take a game at teetotum for five minutes, which he terminated in the same unceremonious way as that under the tree, and then he desired to be shown the room wherein he was to sleep. Mrs. Philpot immediately, contrary to her usual custom, jumped up with great alacrity, lighted a candle, and conducted her guest to his apartment; while Sally, contrary to *her* usual custom, reclined herself in her mistress's great arm-chair, yawned three or four times, and then exclaimed, "Heigho! it's getting very late! I wish my husband would come home!"

Now, although we have a very mean opinion of those who cannot keep a secret of importance, we are not fond of useless mysteries, and therefore think proper to tell the reader that the teetotum in question had the peculiar property of causing those who played therewith to lose all remembrance of their former character, and to adopt that of their antagonists in the game. During the process of spinning, the personal identity of the two players was completely changed. Now, on the evening of this memorable day, Jacob Philpot, the landlord of the rampant Red Lion, had spent a few convivial hours with mine host of the Blue Boar, a house on

the road-side, about two miles from Stockwell; and the two publicans had discussed the ale, grog, and tobacco in the manner customary with Britons, whose insignia are roaring rampant red lions, green dragons, blue boars, &c. Therefore, when Jacob came home, he began to call about him, with the air of one who purposeth that his arrival shall be no secret; and very agreeably surprised was he when Mrs. Philpot ran out from the house, and assisted him to dismount, for Jacob was somewhat rotund; and yet more did he marvel when, instead of haranguing him in a loud voice (as she had whilom done on similar occasions, greatly to his discomfiture), she good-humoredly said she would lead his nag to the stable, and then go and call Philip the hostler. "Humph!" said the host of the Lion, leaning with his back against the door-post, "after a calm comes a storm. She'll make up for this presently, I'll warrant." But Mrs. Philpot put up the horse, and called Philip, and then returned in peace and quietness, and attempted to pass into the house, without uttering a word to her lord and master.

"What's the matter with you, my dear?" asked Jacob Philpot; "a'n't you well?"—"Yes, sir," replied Mrs. Philpot, "very well, I thank you. But pray take away your leg, and let me go into the house."—"But didn't you think I was very late?" asked Jacob.—"Oh! I don't know," replied Mrs. Philpot, "when gentlemen get together, they don't think how the time goes." Poor Jacob was quite delighted, and, as it was dusk, and by no means, as he conceived, a scandalous proceeding, he forthwith put one arm around Mrs. Philpot's neck, and stole a kiss, whereat she said, "Oh, dear me! how could you think of doing such a thing?" and immediately squeezed herself past him, and ran into the house, where Sally sat, in the arm-chair before mentioned, with a handkerchief over her head, pretending to be asleep.

"Come, my dear," said Jacob to his wife, "I'm glad to to see you in such good humor. You shall make me a glass of rum and water, and take some of it yourself."—"I must go into the back kitchen for some water, then," replied his wife, and away she ran, and Jacob followed her, marvelling still more at her unusual alacrity. "My dear," quoth he, "I am sorry to give you so much trouble," and again he put his arm around her neck. "La, sir!" she cried, "if you

don't let me go, I'll call out, I declare."—"He, he—ha, ha!" said Jacob; "call out! that's a good one, however! a man's wife calling out because her husband's going to kiss her!"—"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Philpot; "I am sure it's a shame to use a poor girl so!"—"A poor girl!" exclaimed the landlord, "ahem! was once mayhap."—"I don't value your insinuations *that*," said Mrs. Philpot snapping her fingers; "I wonder what you take me for!"—"So ho!" thought her spouse, "she's come to herself now; I thought it was all a sham; but I'll coax her a bit;" so he fell in with her apparent whim, and called her a good girl; but still she resisted his advances, and asked him what he took her for. "Take you for!" cried Jacob, "why, for my own dear Sally to be sure, so don't make any more fuss."—"I have a great mind to run out of the house," said she, "and never enter it any more."

This threat gave no sort of alarm to Jacob, but it somewhat tickled his fancy, and he indulged himself in a very hearty laugh, at the end of which he good-humoredly told her to go to bed, and he would follow her presently, as soon as he had looked after his horse, and pulled off his boots. This proposition was no sooner made than the good man's ears were suddenly grasped from behind; and his head was shaken and twisted about, as though it had been the purpose of the assailant to wrench it from his shoulders. Mrs. Philpot instantly made her escape from the kitchen, leaving her spouse in the hands of the enraged Sally, who, under the influence of the teetotum delusion, was firmly persuaded that she was inflicting wholesome discipline upon her husband, whom she had, as she conceived, caught in the act of making love to the maid. Sally was active and strong, and Jacob Philpot was, as before hinted, somewhat obese, and, withal, not in excellent "wind;" consequently it was some time ere he could disengage himself; and then he stood panting and blowing, and utterly lost in astonishment, while Sally saluted him with divers appellations, which it would not be seemly here to set down.

When Jacob did find his tongue, however, he answered her much in the same style; and added, that he had a great mind to lay a stick about her back. "What! strike a woman! Eh—would you, you coward?" and immediately she darted forward, and, as she termed it, put her mark upon

him with her nails, whereby his rubicund countenance was greatly disfigured, and his patience entirely exhausted: but Sally was too nimble, and made her escape up-stairs. So the landlord of the Red Lion, having got rid of the two mad or drunken women, very philosophically resolved to sit down for half an hour by himself, to think over the business, while he took his "night-cap." He had scarcely brewed the ingredients, when he was roused by a rap at the window; and, in answer to his inquiry of "who's there?" he recognized the voice of his neighbor, George Syms, and, of course, immediately admitted him; for George was a good customer, and, consequently, welcome at all hours. "My good friend," said Syms, "I dare say you are surprised to see me here at this time of night; but I can't get into my own house. My wife is drunk, I believe."—"And so is mine," quoth the landlord; "so, sit you down and make yourself comfortable. Hang me if I think I'll go to bed to-night!" "No more will I," said Syms; "I've got a job to do early in the morning, and then I shall be ready for it." So the two friends sat down and had scarcely begun to enjoy themselves when another rap was heard at the window, and mine host recognized the voice of Peter Brown, who came with the same complaint against his wife, and was easily persuaded to join the party, each declaring that the women must have contrived to meet, during their absence from home, and all get fuddled together.

Matters went on pleasantly enough for some time, while they continued to rail against the women; but, when that subject was exhausted, George Syms, the shoemaker, began to talk about shoeing horses; and Peter Brown, the blacksmith, averred that he could make a pair of jockey boots with any man for fifty miles round. The host of the rampant Red Lion considered these things at first as a sort of a joke, which he had no doubt, from such good customers, was exceedingly good, though he could not exactly comprehend it; but when Peter Brown answered to the name of George Syms, and George Syms responded to that of Peter Brown, he was somewhat more bewildered, and could not help thinking that his guests had drunk quite enough. He, however, satisfied himself with the reflection that that was no business of his, and that "a man must live by his trade." With the exception of those apparent occasional cross-purposes, conversation went on as well as could be expected under

existing circumstances; and the three unfortunate husbands sat and talked, and drank, and smoked, till tired nature cried, "Hold, enough!"

In the meanwhile, Mrs. George Syms, who had been much scandalized at the appearance of Peter Brown beneath her bedroom window, whereinto he vehemently solicited admittance, altogether in the most public and unblushing manner; she, poor soul! lay for an hour much disturbed in her mind, and pondering on the extreme impropriety of Mr. Brown's conduct, and its probable consequences. She then began to wonder where her own good man could be staying so late; and after much tumbling and tossing to and fro, being withal a woman of great imagination, she discerned in her mind's eye divers scenes which might probably be then acting, and in which George Syms appeared to be taking a part that did not at all meet her approbation. Accordingly she arose, and throwing her garment about her with a degree of elegant negligence for which the ladies of Stockwell have long been celebrated, she incontinently went to the house of Peter Brown, at whose bedroom window she perceived a head. With the intuitive knowledge of costume possessed by ladies in general, she instantly, through the murky night, discovered that the cap on the said head was of the female gender; and therefore boldly went up thereunto and said, "Mrs. Brown, have you seen anything of my husband?"—"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, "haven't *you* seen him? Well, I'd have you see after him pretty quickly, for he was here, just where you stand now, more than two hours ago, talking all manner of nonsense to me, and calling me his dear Betsy, so that I was quite ashamed of him! But, howsoever, you needn't be uneasy about me, for you know I wouldn't do anything improper on no account. But have you seen anything of my Peter?"—"I *believe* I have," replied Mrs. Syms, and immediately related the scandalous conduct of the smith beneath her window; and then the two ladies agreed to sally forth in search of their two "worthless, good-for-nothing, drunken husbands."

Now it is the custom with those who get their living by carrying coal, when they are about to convey it to any considerable distance, to commence their journey at such an hour as to reach the first turnpike a little after midnight, that they may be enabled to go out and return home within

the twenty-four hours, and thus save the expense of the toll, which they would otherwise have to pay twice. This is the secret of those apparently lazy fellows whom the Bath ladies and dandies sometimes view with horror and surprise, sleeping in the day-time, in, on, or under carts, benches or wagons. It hath been our lot, when in the city of waters, to hear certain of those theoretical "political economists" remark somewhat harshly on this mode of taking a siesta. We should recommend them henceforth to attend to the advice of Peter Pindar, and—

Mind what they read in godly books,
And not take people by their looks,

for they would not be pleased to be judged in that manner themselves; and the poor fellows in question have generally been travelling all night, not in a mail-coach, but walking over rough roads, and assisting their weary and overworked cavalry up and down a succession of steep hills.

In consequence of this practice, the two forsaken matrons encountered Moses Brown, a first cousin of Peter's, who had just dispatched his wagoner on a commercial enterprise of the description just alluded to. Moses had heard voices as he passed the Lion; and being somewhat of a curious turn, had discovered, partly by listening, and partly by the aid of certain cracks, holes, and ill-fitting joints in the shutters, who the gentlemen were whose goodwill and pleasure it was "to vex the dull ear of night" with their untimely mirth. Moses, moreover, was a meek man, and professed to be extremely sorry for the two good women who had two such roaring, rattling blades for their husbands; for, by this time the bacchanalians, having exhausted their conversational powers, had commenced a series of songs. So, under his guidance, the ladies reconnoitred the drunken trio through the cracks, holes, and ill-fitting joints aforesaid.

Poor George Syms was by this time regularly "done up," and dozing in his chair; but Peter Brown, the smith, was still in his glory, and singing in no small voice a certain song, which was by no means fitting be chanted in the ear of his spouse. As for Jacob Philpot, the landlord, he sat erect in his chair with the dogged resolution of a man who feels that he is at his post, and is determined to be "no starter." At this moment Sally made her appearance in the room, in the same sort of dishabille as that worn by the ladies at the win-

dow, and commenced a very unceremonious harangue to George Syms and Peter Brown, telling them that they ought to be ashamed of themselves not to have been at home hours ago; "as for this fellow," said she, giving poor Philpot a tremendous box on the ear, "I'll make him remember it, I'll warrant." Jacob hereupon arose in great wrath, but ere he could ascertain precisely the exact centre of gravity, Sally settled his position by another cuff, which made his eyes twinkle, and sent him reeling back into his seat. Seeing these things the ladies without began, as fox-hunters say, to "give tongue," and vociferously demanded admittance; whereupon Mrs. Philpot put her head out from a window above, and told them that she would be down and let them in in a minute, and that it was a great pity gentlemen should ever get too much beer; and then she popped in her head, and in less than the stipulated time, ran down stairs and opened the street door; and so the wives were admitted to their delinquent husbands; but meek Moses Brown went his way, having a wife at home, and having no desire to abide the storm which he saw was coming.

Peter Brown was, as we said before, in high feather; and therefore, when he saw Mrs. Syms, whom he (acting under the teetotum delusion) mistook for the wife of his own particular bosom, he gaily accosted her, "Ah, old girl!—Is it you? What! you've come to your senses, eh? slept it off, I suppose. Well, well; never mind! Forgive and forget, I say. I never saw you so before, I will say *that* for you, however. So give us a buss, old girl! and let us go home;" and without ceremony he began to suit the action to the word, whereupon the real Mrs. Brown flew to Mrs. Syms' assistance, and by hanging round Peter's neck enabled her friend to escape. Mrs. Syms, immediately she was released, began to shake up her drowsy George, who, immediately he opened his eyes, scarcely knowing where he was, marvelled much to find himself thus handled by, as he supposed, his neighbor's wife; but with the maudlin cunning of a drunken man, he thought it was an excellent joke, and therefore threw his arms round her, and began to hug her with a wondrous and unusual degree of fondness, whereby the poor woman was much affected, and called him her dear George, and said she knew it was not his fault, but "all along of that brute," pointing to Peter Brown, that he had drunk himself into such

a state. "Come along, my dear," she concluded, "let us go and leave him—I don't care if I never see him any more."

The exasperation of Peter Brown at seeing and hearing, as he imagined, his own wife act and speak in this shameful manner before his face, may be "more easily imagined than described;" but his genuine wife, who belonged, as he conceived, to the drunken man, hung so close about his neck that he found it impossible to escape. George Syms, however, was utterly unable to rise, and sat, with an idiot-like simper upon his face, as if giving himself up to a pleasing delusion, while his wife was patting and coaxing and wheedling him in every way to induce him to get upon his legs and try to go home. At length, as he vacantly stared about, he caught a glimpse of Mrs. Brown, whom, to save repetition, we may as well call his teetotum wife, hanging about his neighbor's neck. This sight effectually roused him, and before Mrs. Syms was aware of his intention he started up and ran furiously at Peter Brown, who received him much in the manner that might be expected, with a salutation in the "bread-basket" which sent him reeling on the floor. As a matter of course Mrs. Syms took the part of her fallen husband, and put her mark on Mr. Peter Brown; and, as a matter of course, Mrs. Peter Brown took the part of her spouse, and commenced an attack on Mrs. Syms.

In the meanwhile Sally had not been idle. After chastening Jacob Philpot to her heart's content, she, with the assistance of Mrs. Philpot and Philip the hostler, who was much astonished to hear her "order the mistress about," conveyed him upstairs, where he was deposited, as he was, upon a spare bed to "take his chance," as she said, "and sleep off his drunken fit." Sally then returned to the scene of strife, and desired the "company" to go about their business, for she should not allow anything more to be "called for" that night. Having said this with an air of authority she left the room; and though Mrs. Syms and Mrs. Brown were greatly surprised thereat, they said nothing, inasmuch as they were somewhat ashamed of their own appearance, and had matters of more importance than Sally's eccentricity to think of, as Mrs. Syms had been cruelly wounded in her new shawl, which she had imprudently thrown over her shoulders; and the left side of the lace on Mrs. Brown's cap had been torn away in the recent conflict. Mrs. Philpot, in enacting her

part as the teetotum Sally of the night, besought the ladies to go home and leave the gentlemen to sleep where they were—*i.e.* upon the floor—till the morning; for Peter Brown, notwithstanding the noise he had made, was as incapable of standing as the quieter George Syms. So the women dragged them into separate corners of the room, placed pillows under their heads, and threw a blanket over each, and then left them to repose. The two disconsolate wives each forthwith departed to her own lonely pillow, leaving Mrs. Philpot particularly puzzled at the deference with which they had treated her, by calling her "Madam," as if she were mistress of the house.

Leaving them all to their slumbers, we must now say a word or two about the teetotum, the properties of which were to change people's characters, spinning the mind of one man or woman into the body of another. The duration of the delusion caused by this droll game of the old gentleman's depended upon the length of time spent in the diversion; and five minutes was the specific period for causing it to last to the next sunrise or sunset *after* the change had been effected. Therefore when the morning came Mrs. Philpot and Sally and Peter Brown and George Syms all came to their senses. The two latter went quietly home, with aching heads and very confused recollections of the preceding evening; and shortly after their departure Mrs. Philpot awoke in great astonishment at finding herself in the garret; and Sally was equally surprised and much alarmed at finding herself in her mistress's room, from which she hastened in quick time, leaving all things in due order.

The elderly stranger made his appearance soon after, and appeared to have brushed up his shabby-genteel clothes, for he really looked much more respectable than on the preceding evening. He ordered his breakfast, and sat down thereto very quietly, and asked for the newspaper, and pulled out his spectacles, and began to con the politics of the day much at his ease, no one having the least suspicion that he and his teetotum had been the cause of all the uproar at the Red Lion. In due time the landlord made his appearance, with sundry marks of violence upon his jolly countenance, and, after due obeisance made to his respectable-looking guest, took the liberty of telling his spouse that he should insist upon her sending Sally away, for that he had never been so

mauled since he was born; but Mrs. Philpot told him he ought to be ashamed of himself, and she was very glad the girl had spirit enough to protect herself, and that she wouldn't part with her on any account. She then referred to what had passed in the back kitchen, taking to herself the credit of having inflicted that punishment which had been administered by the hands of Sally.

Jacob Philpot was now more than ever convinced that his wife had been paying her respects to a huge stone bottle of rum which stood in the closet; and he "made bold" to tell her his thoughts, whereat Mrs. Philpot thought fit to put herself into a tremendous passion, although she could not help fearing that, perhaps, she might have taken a drop too much of something, for she was unable, in any other manner, to account for having slept in the garret.

The elderly stranger now took upon himself to recommend mutual forgiveness, and stated that it was really quite pardonable for any one to take a little too much of such very excellent ale as that at the Red Lion. "For my own part," said he, "I don't know whether I didn't get a trifle beyond the mark myself last night. But I hope, madam, I did not annoy you."

"Oh dear, no, not at all, sir," replied Mrs. Philpot, whose good-humor was restored at this compliment paid to the good cheer of the Lion; "you were exceedingly pleasant, I assure you—just enough to make you funny: we had a hearty laugh about the teetotum, you know."

"Ah!" said the stranger, "I guess how it was, then. I always introduce the teetotum when I want to be merry."

Jacob Philpot expressed a wish to understand the game, and after spinning it two or three times, proposed to take his chance, for five minutes, with the stranger; but the latter, laughing heartily, would by no means agree with the proposition, and declared that it would be downright cheating, as he was an overmatch for any beginner. "However," he continued, "as soon as any of your neighbors come in, I'll put you in the way of it, and we'll have some of your ale now, just to pass the time. It will do neither of us any harm after last night's affair, and I want to have some talk with you about the coal trade."

They accordingly sat down together, and the stranger displayed considerable knowledge in the science of mining;

and Jacob was so much delighted with his companion, that an hour or two slipped away, as he said, "in no time;" and then there was heard the sound of a horse's feet at the door, and a somewhat authoritative hillo!

"It is our parson," said Jacob, starting up, and he ran to the door, to inquire what might be his reverence's pleasure. "Good morning," said the Reverend Mr. Stanhope. "I'm going over to dine with our club at the Old Boar, and I want you just to cast your eye on those fellows in my home close; you can see them out of your parlor window."

"Yes, to be sure, sir," replied Jacob.

"Hem!" quoth Mr. Stanhope, "have you anybody indoors?"

"Yes, sir, we have," replied Jacob, "a strange gentleman, who seems to know a pretty deal about mining and them sort of things. I think he's some great person in disguise; he seems regularly edicated—up to everything."

"Eh, ah! a great person in disguise!" exclaimed Mr. Stanhope. "I'll just step in a minute. It seems as if there were a shower coming over, and I'm in no hurry, and it is not worth while to get wet through for the sake of a few minutes." So he alighted from his horse, soliloquizing to himself, "Perhaps the Lord Chancellor! Who knows? However, I shall take care to show my principles;" and straightway he went into the house, and was most respectfully saluted by the elderly stranger; and they entered into a conversation upon the standing English topics of weather, wind, crops, and the coal trade; and Mr. Stanhope contrived to introduce therein sundry unkind things against the Pope and all his followers; and avowed himself a stanch "church-and-king" man, and spoke enthusiastically of our "glorious constitution," and lauded divers individuals then in power, but more particularly those who studied the true interests of the Church, by seeking out and preferring men of merit and talent to fill vacant benefices. The stranger thereat smiled significantly, as though he could, if he felt disposed, say something to the purpose; and Mr. Stanhope felt more inclined than ever to think the landlord might have conjectured very near the truth, and consequently redoubled his efforts to make the agreeable, professing his regret at being obliged to dine out that day, etc. The stranger politely thanked him for his consideration, and stated that

he was never at a loss for employment, and that he was then rambling for a few days, to relax his mind from the fatigues of an overwhelming mass of important business, to which his duty compelled him to attend early and late. "Perhaps," he continued, "you will smile when I tell you that I am now engaged in a series of experiments relative to the power of the centrifugal force, and its capacity of overcoming various degrees of friction." (Here he produced the teetotum.) "You perceive the different surfaces of the under edge of this little thing. The outside, you see, is all of ivory, but indented in various ways; and yet I have not been able to decide whether the roughest or smoothest more frequently arrest its motions. The colors, of course, are merely indications. Here is my register," and he produced a book, wherein divers abstruse mathematical calculations were apparent. "I always prefer other people to spin it, as then I obtain a variety of impelling power. Perhaps you will do the favor just to twirl it round a few times alternately with the landlord? Two make a fairer experiment than one. Just for five minutes. I'll not trouble you a moment longer, I promise you."

"Hem!" thought Mr. Stanhope.

"Learned men, now and then,
Have very strange vagaries!"

However, he commenced spinning the teetotum, turn and turn with Jacob Philpot, who was highly delighted both with the drollery of the thing, and the honor of playing with the parson of the parish, and laughed most immoderately, while the stranger stood by, looking at his stop-watch as demurely as on the preceding evening, until the five minutes had expired; and then, in the middle of the Rev. Mr. Stanhope's spin, he took up the little toy and put it into his pocket.

Jacob Philpot immediately arose, and shook the stranger warmly by the hand, and told him that he should be happy to see him whenever he came that way again; and then nodding to Mr. Stanhope and the landlady, went out at the front door, mounted the horse that stood there, and rode away.

"Where's the fellow going?" cried Mrs. Philpot; "Hillo! Jacob, I say!"—"Well, mother," said the Reverend Mr. Stanhope, "what's the matter now?" but Mrs. Philpot had reached the front of the house, and continued to shout "Hillo! hillo, come back, I tell you!"—"That woman is

always doing some strange thing or other," observed Mr. Stanhope to the stranger. "What on earth can possess her to go calling after the parson in that manner?"—"I declare he's rode off with Squire Jones's horse," cried Mrs. Philpot, re-entering the house. "To be sure he has," said Mr. Stanhope; "he borrowed it on purpose to go to the Old Boar."—"Did he?" exclaimed the landlady; and without telling me a word about it! But I'll Old Boar him, I promise you!"—"Don't make such a fool of yourself, mother," said the parson; "it can't signify twopence to you where he goes."—"Can't it?" rejoined Mrs. Philpot. "I'll tell you what, your worship——" "Don't worship me, woman," exclaimed the teetotum landlord parson; "worship! what nonsense now! Why, you've been taking your drops again this morning, I think. Worship, indeed! To be sure, I did once, like a fool, promise to worship *you*; but if my time was to come over again, I know what—— But, never mind—don't you see it's twelve o'clock?" Come, quick, let us have what there is to eat, and then we'll have a comfortable pipe under the tree. What say you, sir?"—"With all my heart," replied the elderly stranger.

Mrs. Philpot could make nothing of the parson's speech about worshipping her; but the order for something to eat was very distinct; and though she felt much surprised thereat, as well as at the proposed smoking under the tree, she, nevertheless, was much gratified that so unusual an order should be given on that particular day, as she had a somewhat better dinner than usual, namely, a leg of mutton upon the spit. Therefore she bustled about with exceeding goodwill, and Sally spread a clean cloth upon the table in the little parlor for the parson and the strange old gentleman; and when the mutton was placed upon the table, the latter hoped they should have the pleasure of Mrs. Philpot's company; but she looked somewhat doubtfully till the parson said, "Come, come, mother, don't make a bother about it; sit down, can't you, when the gentleman bids you." Therefore she smoothed her apron and made one at the dinner-table, and conducted herself with so much precision that the teetotum parson looked upon her with considerable surprise, while she regarded him with no less, inasmuch as he talked in a very unclerical manner; and among other strange things, swore that his wife was as "drunk as blazes"

the night before, and winked at her, and behaved altogether in a style very unbecoming a minister in his own parish.

At one o'clock there was a great sensation caused in the village of Stockwell, by the appearance of their reverend pastor and the elderly stranger, sitting on the bench which went round the tree, which stood before the sign of the roaring rampant Red Lion, each with a long pipe in his mouth, blowing clouds, which would not have disgraced the most inveterate smoker of the "black diamond" fraternity, and ever and anon moistening their clay with "heavy wet," from tankards placed upon a small table, which Mrs. Philpot had provided for their accommodation. The little boys and girls first approached within a respectful distance, and then ran away giggling to tell their companions; and they told their mothers, who came and peeped likewise; and many were diverted, and many were scandalized at the sight; yet the parson seemed to care for none of these things, but cracked his joke, and sipped his ale, and smoked his pipe, with as much easy nonchalance as if he had been in his own arm-chair at the rectory. Yet it must be confessed that now and then there was a sort of equivocal remark made by him, as though he had some faint recollection of his former profession, although he evinced not the smallest sense of shame at the change which had been wrought in him. Indeed this trifling imperfection in the change of identity appears to have attended such transformations in general, and might have arisen from the individual bodies retaining their own clothes (for the mere fashion of dress hath a great influence on some minds), or, perhaps, because a profession or trade, with the habits thereof, cannot be entirely shaken off, nor a new one perfectly learned, by spinning a teetotum for five minutes.

The time had now arrived when George Syms, the shoemaker, and Peter Brown, the blacksmith, were accustomed to take their "pint and pipe after dinner," and greatly were they surprised to see their places so occupied; and not a little was their astonishment increased, when the parson lifted up his voice, ordered Sally to bring out a couple of chairs, and then shook them both warmly by the hand, and welcomed them by the affectionate appellation of "My hearties!" He then winked, and in an undertone began to sing—

"Though I'm tied to a crusty old woman,
Much given to scolding and jealousy,
I know that the case is too common,
And so I will ogle each girl I see.

Tol de rol, lol, etc.

"Come, my lads!" he resumed, "sit you down and clap half a yard of clay into your mouths." The two worthy artisans looked at each other significantly, or rather insignificantly, for they knew not what to think, and did as they were bid. "Come, why don't you talk?" said the teetotum parson landlord, after a short silence. "You're as dull as a couple of tom-cats with their ears cut off—talk, man, talk—there's no doing nothing without talking." This last part of his speech seemed more particularly addressed to Peter Brown, who, albeit, a man of a sound head, and well skilled in such matters as appertained unto iron and the coal trade, had not been much in the habit of mixing with the clergy; therefore he felt for a moment as he said, "non-plushed;" but fortunately he recollected the Catholic question, about which most people were then talking, and which everybody professed to understand. Therefore he forthwith introduced the subject; and being well aware of the parson's bias, and having, moreover, been told that he had written a pamphlet; therefore (though, to do Peter Brown justice, he was not accustomed to read such publications) he scrupled not to give his opinion very freely, and concluded by taking up his pint and drinking a very unchristianlike malediction against the Pope. George Syms followed on the same side, and concluded in the same manner, adding thereunto, "Your good healths, gemmen." "What a pack of nonsense!" exclaimed the parson. "I should like to know what harm the Pope can do us! I tell you what, my lads, it's all my eye and Betty Martin. Live and let live, I say. So long as I can get a good living I don't care the toss of a halfpenny who's uppermost. For my part, I'd as soon live at the sign of the Mitre as the Lion, or mount the cardinal's hat for that matter, if I thought I could get anything by it. Look at home, say I. The Pope's an old woman, and so are they that are afraid of him."

The elderly stranger here seemed highly delighted, and cried "Bravo!" and clapped the speaker on the back and said, "That's your sort! Go it, my hearty!" But Peter Brown was one of the sturdy English old-fashioned school, and did not believe in hot and cold being blown out of the same mouth,

took the liberty of telling the parson, in a very unceremonious way, that he seemed to have changed his opinions very suddenly. "Not I," said the other; "I was always the same way of thinking." "Then words have no meaning," observed George Syms angrily, "for I heard you myself. You talked as loud about the wickedness of 'mancipation as ever I heard a man in my life, no longer ago than last Sunday." "Then I must have been drunk—that's all I can say about the business," replied the other, coolly; and he began to fill his pipe with the utmost nonchalance, as though it was a matter of course. Such apparently scandalous conduct was, however, too much for the unsophisticated George Syms and Peter Brown, who simultaneously threw down their reckoning and, much to their credit, left the turncoat reprobate parson to the company of the elderly gentleman.

If we were to relate half the whimsical consequences of the teetotum tricks of this strange personage, we might fill volumes; but as it is not our intention to allow the detail to swell even into one, we must hastily sketch the proceedings of poor Jacob Philpot after he left the Red Lion to dine with sundry of the gentry and clergy at the Old Boar, in his new capacity of an ecclesiastic, in the outward form of a somewhat negligently dressed landlord. He was accosted on the road by divers of his coal-carrying neighbors with a degree of familiarity which was exceedingly mortifying to his feelings. One told him to be home in time to take part of a gallon of ale that he had won of neighbor Smith; a second reminded him that to-morrow was club night at the Nag's Head; and a third asked him where he had stolen his horse. At length he arrived, much out of humor, at the Old Boar, an inn of a very different description to the Red Lion, being a posting-house of no inconsiderable magnitude, wherein that day was to be holden the symposium of certain grandees of the adjacent country, as before hinted.

The landlord, who happened to be standing at the door, was somewhat surprised at the formal manner with which Jacob Philpot greeted him and gave his horse into the charge of the hostler; but as he knew him only by sight, and had many things to attend to, he went his way without making any remark, and thus, unwittingly increased the irritation of Jacob's new teetotum sensitive feelings. "Are any of the gentlemen come yet?" asked Jacob, haughtily, of one of

the waiters. "What gentlemen?" quoth the waiter. "Any of them," said Jacob—"Mr. Wiggins, Doctor White, or Captain Pole?" At this moment a carriage drove up to the door, and the bells all began ringing, and the waiters ran to see who had arrived, and Jacob Philpot was left unheeded. "This is very strange conduct!" observed he; "I never met with such incivility in my life! One would think I was a dog!" Scarcely had this soliloquy terminated, when a lady, who had alighted from the carriage (leaving the gentleman who came with her to give some orders about the luggage), entered the inn, and was greatly surprised to find her delicate hand seized by the horny grasp of the landlord of the Red Lion, who addressed her as "Dear Mrs. Wilkins," and vowed he was quite delighted at the unexpected pleasure of seeing her, and hoped the worthy rector was well, and all the dear little darlings. Mrs. Wilkins disengaged her hand as quickly as possible, and made her escape into a room, the door of which was held open for her admittance by the waiter; and then the worthy rector made his appearance, followed by one of the "little darlings," whom Jacob Philpot, in the joy of his heart at finding himself once more among friends, snatched up in his arms, and thereby produced a bellowing which instantly brought the alarmed mother from her retreat. "What is that frightful man doing with the child?" she cried, and Jacob, who could scarcely believe his ears, was immediately deprived of his burden, while his particular friend, the worthy rector, looked upon him with a cold and vacant stare, and then retired into his room with his wife and the little darling, and Jacob was once more left to his own cogitations. "I see it!" he exclaimed, after a short pause, "I see it! This is the reward of rectitude of principle! This is the reward of undeviating and inflexible firmness of purpose! He has read my unanswerable pamphlet? I always thought there was a laxity of principle about him!"

So Jacob forthwith walked into the open air to cool himself, and strolled round the garden of the inn, and meditated upon divers important subjects; and thus he passed his time till the hour of dinner, though he could not but keep occasionally wondering that some of his friends did not come down to meet him, since they must have seen him walking in the garden. His patience, however, was at

length exhausted, and his appetite was exceedingly clamorous, partly, perhaps, because his *outward* man had been used to dine at the plebeian hour of noon, while his inward man made a point of never taking anything more than a biscuit and a glass of wine between breakfast and five o'clock; and even that little modicum had been omitted on this fatal day, in consequence of the incivility of the people of the inn.

"The dinner-hour was five *precisely*," said he, looking at his watch, "and now it is half-past—but I'll wait a *little* longer. It's a bad plan to hurry them. It puts the cook out of humor, and then all goes wrong." Therefore he waited a little longer; that is to say, till the calls of absolute hunger became quite ungovernable, and then he went into the house, where the odor of delicate viands was quite provoking; so he followed the guidance of his nose and arrived in the large dining-room, where he found, to his great surprise and mortification, that the company were assembled, and the work of destruction had been going on for some time, as the second course had just been placed on the table. Jacob felt that the neglect with which he had been treated was "enough to make a parson swear;" and perhaps he would have sworn, but that he had no time to spare; and therefore, as all the seats at the upper end of the table were engaged, he deposited himself on a vacant chair about the centre, between two gentlemen with whom he had no acquaintance, and, spreading his napkin in his lap, demanded of a waiter what fish had gone out. The man replied only by a stare and a smile—a line of conduct which was by no means surprising, seeing that the most stylish part of Philpot's dress was, without dispute, the napkin aforesaid. For the rest, it was unlike the garb of the strange gentleman, inasmuch as that, though possibly entitled to the epithet shabby, it could not be termed genteel. "What's the fellow gaping at?" cried Jacob, in an angry voice; "go and tell your master that I want to speak to him directly. I don't understand such treatment. Tell him to come immediately! Do you hear?"

The loud tone in which this was spoken aroused the attention of the company; and most of them cast a look of inquiry, first at the speaker and then round the table, as if to discern by whom the strange gentleman in the scarlet-and-yellow plush waistcoat and the dirty shirt might be patronized; but there

were others who recognized the landlord of the Red Lion at Stockwell. The whole, however, were somewhat startled when he addressed them as follows: "Really, gentlemen, I must say that a joke may be carried too far; and if it was not for my cloth" (here he handled the napkin), "I declare I don't know how I might act. I have been walking in the garden for these two hours, and you *must* have seen me. And now you stare at me as if you didn't know me! Really, gentlemen, it is too bad! I love a joke as well as any man, and can take one too; but, as I said before, a joke *may* be carried too far."

"I think so too," said the landlord of the Old Boar, tapping him on the shoulder; "so come along, and don't make a fool of yourself here."—"Fellow!" cried Jacob, rising in great wrath, "go your ways! Be off, I tell you! Mr. Chairman, we have known each other now for a good many years, and you must be convinced that I can take a joke as well as any man; but human nature can endure this no longer. Mr. Wiggins! Captain Pole! my good friend Doctor White! I appeal to you!" Here the gentlemen named looked especially astounded. "What! can it be possible that you have *all* agreed to cut me! Oh, no! I will not believe that political differences of opinion can run *quite* so high. Come—let us have no more of this nonsense!" "No, no, we've had quite enough of it," said the landlord of the Old Boar, pulling the chair from beneath the last speaker, who was consequently obliged again to be upon his legs, while there came from various parts of the table, cries of "Chair! Chair! Turn him out!" "Man!" roared the teetotum parsonified landlord of the Red Lion, to the landlord of the Old Boar—"Man! you shall repent of this! If it wasn't for my cloth, I'd soon——." "Come, give me the cloth!" said the other, snatching away the napkin, which Jacob had buttoned in his waistcoat, and thereby causing that garment to fly open and expose more of dirty linen and skin than is usually sported at a dinner-party. Poor Philpot's rage had now reached its acme, and he again appealed to the chairman by name. "Colonel Martin!" said he, "can you sit by and see me used thus? I am sure *you* will not pretend that you don't know me!" "Not I," replied the chairman; "I know you well enough, and a confounded impudent fellow you are. I'll tell you what, my lad, next time you apply for a license, you shall hear of this."

The landlord of the Old Boar was withal a kind-hearted man; and as he well knew that the loss of its license would be ruin to the rampant Red Lion and all concerned therewith, he was determined that poor Philpot should be saved from destruction in spite of his teeth; therefore, without further ceremony, he, being a muscular man, laid violent hands upon the said Jacob, and, with the assistance of his waiters, conveyed him out of the room, in despite of much struggling, and sundry interjections concerning his "cloth." When they had deposited him safely in an arm-chair in "the bar," the landlady, who had frequently seen him before in his proper character—that of a civil man—who "knew his place" in society, very kindly offered him a cup of tea; and the landlord asked how he could think of making such a fool of himself; and the waiter, whom he had accosted on first entering the house, vouched for his not having had anything to eat or drink; whereupon, they spoke of the remains of a turbot which had just come down stairs, and a haunch of venison that was to follow. It is a sad thing to have a mind and body that are no match for each other. Jacob's outward man would have been highly gratified at the exhibition of these things, but the spirit of the parson was too mighty within, and spurned every offer, and the body was compelled to obey. So the horse that was borrowed of the squire was ordered out, and Jacob Philpot mounted and rode on his way in excessive irritation, growling vehemently at the insult and indignity which had been committed against the "cloth" in general, and his own person in particular.

"The sun sank beneath the horizon," as novelists say, when Jacob Philpot entered the village of Stockwell, and, as if waking from a dream, he suddenly started, and was much surprised to find himself on horseback; for the last thing that he recollected was going upstairs at his own house, and composing himself for a nap, that he might be ready to join neighbor Scroggins and Dick Smith, when they came in the evening to drink the gallon of ale lost by the latter. "And, my eyes!" said he, "if I haven't got the squire's horse that the parson borrowed this morning. Well—it's very odd, however the ride has done me a deal of good, for I feel as if I hadn't had anything all day, and yet I did pretty well, too, at the leg of mutton at dinner." Mrs. Philpot received her lord and nominal master in no very gracious mood, and

said she would like to know where he had been riding. "That's more than I can tell you," replied Jacob; "however, I know I'm as hungry as a greyhound, though I never made a better dinner in my life."—"More shame for you," said Mrs. Philpot; "I wish the Old Boar was a thousand miles off."—"What's the woman talking about?" quoth Jacob. "Eh! what! at it again, I suppose," and he pointed to the closet containing the rum-bottle. "Hush!" cried Mrs. Philpot, "here's the parson coming down-stairs!"—"The parson!" exclaimed Jacob; "what's he been doing up-stairs, I should like to know?"—"He has been to take a nap on mistress's bed, said Sally. "The dickens he has! This is a pretty story," quoth Jacob. "How could I help it?" asked Mrs. Philpot; "you should stay at home and look after your own business, and not go ramshackling about the country. You shan't hear the last of the Old Boar just yet, I promise you." To avoid the threatened storm, and satisfy the calls of hunger, Jacob made off to the larder, and commenced an attack upon the leg of mutton.

At this moment the Reverend Mr. Stanhope opened the little door at the foot of the stairs. On waking and finding himself upon a bed, he had concluded that he must have fainted in consequence of the agitation of mind produced by the gross insults which he had suffered, or perhaps from the effects of hunger. Great, therefore, was his surprise to find himself at the Red Lion in his own parish; and the first questions he asked of Mrs. Philpot were, how and when he had been brought there.

"I.a, sir," said the landlady, "you went up-stairs of your own accord, after you were tired smoking under the tree."

"Smoking under the tree, woman!" exclaimed Mr. Stanhope; "what are you talking about? Do you recollect whom you are speaking to?"

"Ay, marry, do I," replied the sensitive Mrs. Philpot; "and you told Sally to call you when Scroggins and Smith came for their gallon of ale, as you meant to join the party."

The Reverend Mr. Stanhope straightway took up his hat, put it upon his head, and stalked with indignant dignity out of the house, opining that the poor woman was in her cups; and meditated, as he walked home, on the extraordinary af-

fairs of the day. But his troubles were not yet ended, for the report of his public jollification had reached his own household; and John, his trusty man-servant, had been despatched to the Red Lion, and had ascertained that his master was really gone to bed in a state very unfit for a clergyman to be seen in. Some remarkably good-natured friends had been to condole with Mrs. Stanhope upon the extraordinary proceedings of her good man, and to say how much they were shocked, and what a pity it was, and wondering what the bishop would think of it, and divers other equally amiable and consolatory reflections and notes of admiration. Now Mrs. Stanhope, though she had much of the "milk of human kindness" in her composition, had withal a portion of "tartaric-acid" mingled therewith. Therefore, when her beer-drinking husband made his appearance, he found her in a state of effervescence.

"Mary," said he, "I am extremely fatigued. I have been exposed to-day to a series of insults, such as I could not have imagined it possible for any one to offer me."

"Nor anybody else," replied Mrs. Stanhope; "but you are rightly served, and I am glad of it. Who would have supposed that you, the minister of a parish!—Faugh! how filthily you smell of tobacco! I vow I cannot endure to be in the room with you!" and she arose and left the divine to himself, in exceeding great perplexity. However, being a man who loved to do all things in order, he remembered that he had not dined, so he rang the bell and gave the needful instructions, thinking it best to satisfy nature first, and *then* endeavor to ascertain the cause of his beloved Mary's acidity.

His appetite was gone, but that he attributed to having fasted too long, a practice very unusual with him; however, he picked a bit here and there, and then indulged himself with a bottle of his oldest port, which he had about half consumed, and somewhat recovered his spirits, ere his dear Mary made her appearance, and told him that she was perfectly astonished at his conduct. And well might she say so, for *now* the wine, which he had been drinking with unusual rapidity, thinking, good easy man, that he had taken nothing all day, began to have a very visible effect upon a body already saturated with strong ale. He declared that he cared not a fig for the good opinion of any gentleman in the county, that he would always act and speak according to his principles, and

filled a bumper to the health of the Lord Chancellor, and drank sundry more exceedingly loyal toasts, and told his astonished spouse, that he should not be surprised if he was very soon to be made a Dean or a Bishop; and as for the people at the Old Boar, he saw through their conduct—it was all envy, which doth “merit as its shade pursue.” The good lady justly deemed it folly to waste her oratory upon a man in such a state, and reserved her powers for the next morning; and Mr. Stanhope reeled to bed that night in a condition which, to do him justice, he had never before exhibited under his own roof.

The next morning, Mrs Stanhope and her daughter Sophy, a promising young lady about ten years old, of the hoyden class, were at breakfast, when the elderly stranger called at the rectory, and expressed great concern on being told that Mr. S. was somewhat indisposed, and had not yet made his appearance. He said that his business was of very little importance, and merely concerned some geological inquiries which he was prosecuting in the vicinity; but Mrs Stanhope, who had the names of all the ologies by heart, and loved occasionally to talk thereof, persuaded him to wait a short time, little dreaming of the consequence; for the wily old gentleman began to romp with Miss Sophy and, after a while, produced his teetotum, and, in short, so contrived it, that the mother and daughter played together therewith for five minutes. He then politely took his leave, promising to call again; and Mrs Stanhope bobbed him a curtsy, and Sophia assured him that Mr. S. would be extremely happy to afford him every assistance in his scientific researches.

When the worthy divine at length made his appearance in the breakfast parlor, strangely puzzled as to the extreme feverishness and languor which oppressed him, he found Sophy sitting gravely in an arm-chair, reading a treatise on craneology. It was a pleasant thing for him to see her read anything, but he could not help expressing his surprise by observing.

“I should think that book a little above your comprehension, my dear,”—“Indeed! sir,” was the reply; and the little girl laid down the volmne, and sat erect in her chair, and thus continued: “I should think, Mr. Nicodemus Stanhope, that after the specimen of good sense and propriety of conduct which you were pleased to exhibit yesterday, it scarcely becomes you to pretend to estimate the comprehension of others.

"My dear," said the astonished divine, "this is very strange language! You forget whom you are speaking to!"

"Not at all," replied the child. "I know my place, if you don't know yours, and am determined to speak my mind."

If anything could add to the Reverend Mr. Nicodemus Stanhope's surprise, it was the sound of his wife's voice in the garden, calling to his man John to stand out of the way, or she should run over him. Poor John, who was tying up some of her favorite flowers, got out of her way accordingly in quick time, and the next moment his mistress rushed by, trundling a hoop, hallooing and laughing, and highly enjoying his apparent dismay. Throughout that day it may be imagined that the reverend gentleman's philosophy was sorely tried; but we are compelled, by want of room, to leave the particulars of his botheration to the reader's imagination.

We are sorry to say that these were not the only metamorphoses which the mischievous old gentleman wrought in the village of Stockwell. There was a game of teetotum played between a sergeant of dragoons, who had retired upon his well-earned pension, and a baker, who happened likewise to be the renter of a small patch of land adjoining the village. The veteran, with that indistinctness of character before mentioned, shouldered the peel, and took it to the field, and used it for loading and spreading manure, so that it was never afterwards fit for any but dirty work. Then, just to show that he was not afraid of anybody, he cut a gap in the hedge of a small field of wheat which had just been reaped, and was standing in sheaves, and thereby gave admittance to a neighboring bull, who amused himself greatly by tossing the said sheaves, but more particularly those which were set apart as tithes, against which he appeared to have a particular spite, throwing them high into the air, and then bellowing and treading them under foot.

But—we must come to a close. Suffice it to say, that the village of Stockwell was long in a state of confusion in consequence of these games; for the mischief which was done during the period of delusion ended not like the delusion itself, with the rising or setting of the sun.

Having now related as many particulars of these strange occurrences as our limits will permit, we have merely to

state the effect which they produced upon ourselves. Whenever we have since beheld servants aping the conduct of their masters or mistresses, tradesmen wasting their time and money at taverns, clergymen forgetful of the dignity and sacred character of their profession, publicans imagining themselves fit for preachers, children calling their parents to account for their conduct, matrons acting the hoyden, and other incongruities—whenever we witness these and the like occurrences, we conclude that the actors therein have been playing a game with the Old Gentleman's Teetotum.



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All Competitors must cut out and affix the "Competitor's stamp" printed in the upper corner of this page.

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No MS. will be returned *unless* an envelope properly stamped and addressed to the author accompanies it.

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A Plot for a Story *

* Although some very clever plots for a short story were selected from the great number submitted for competition, it was found that to extend them, in the manner indicated by the writers, would require special knowledge of localities and the customs of little-known people—thus debarring many from the contest. The editor, therefore, offers the above plot for expansion to a story of about 4,000 words. Other particulars of this competition will be found on the preceding page.

A young man employed in a machine-shop or iron-foundry. Is clever and ambitious, has been steadily promoted. Now stands next to superintendent who is addicted to drink, is jealous of young man and fears being superseded by him. Young man's father was formerly accountant in the works, but was discharged because of disappearance of a large sum of money. Broken-hearted, he died soon, protesting his innocence, and beseeching his employer to look after the boy. Superintendent is the only person beside employer who is acquainted with these facts. There comes a depression in trade and employer orders a reduction in wages. A strike follows, and superintendent, being drunk at time the strike occurs, has been discharged. Out of revenge determines to blow up employer's house, make young man do the work, and then betray him to authorities. He tells him that his father was hounded to death by the employer, that anything since done for the young man has been dictated by guilty conscience. Also fires his brain with drink, to which he is unaccustomed, until he is ready for revenge. In a frenzy young man rushes off to do the work. Placing machine and setting it to explode within a few minutes, he starts to run home. Has not gone far when he remembers that he has heard his employer's daughter, whom he secretly loves, has returned home that day. He rushes madly back. Will he be in time? But in the darkness on the river bank encounters superintendent. After a few words and a struggle young man is knocked senseless. While struggling he has seen a man approaching and shouts to him to take machine from where it has been placed against the house. The passer-by does so and runs with box towards river when his courage fails and he hurls it from him. It explodes, blows superintendent into the river and mortally injures the rescuer. He proves to be dissipated son of employer returning home to extort money from his father, and lives long enough to confess that he stole the money for which the book-keeper was adjudged guilty. Employer is overcome with remorse; young man is forgiven and made much of and the natural dénouement is the marriage of the young people.

PRIZES

for

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Offered by Short Stories.

No. 16. A prize of \$50 is offered for the **BEST STORY CONSTRUCTED FROM THE PLOT** given in the May number of **SHORT STORIES**. A rigid adherence to the details given in the original scheme is not required, but the expanded story should, in the main, follow the indicated lines. Manuscripts must not exceed 4,000 words in length, and the competition will close July 1st. **\$50.00**

No. 17. A prize of \$50 will be awarded to the writer of the best bit of fiction concerning Chicago and the **WORLD'S FAIR**. There is no restriction as to the theme of the story or its treatment, provided it shall be suitable for use in **SHORT STORIES**, but the length of the MS. must not exceed 4,000 words. Competition closes August 1st. **\$50.00**

No. 18. A prize of \$50 is offered for the best original story of between 8,000 and 5,000 words. The choice of subject is left entirely to contributors, but MSS. must be carefully designated as for the "**BEST STORY**" Competition, or they will not be considered as entered in the contest. Competition closes September 1st. **\$50.00**

Offered by Current Literature.

No. 8. A prize of fifteen dollars will be awarded to the best bit of Society Verse, of not more than 24 lines. Competition closes July 1. **\$15.00**

No. 9. A prize of \$100 will be given for the best article of the writer's experience at the **WORLD'S FAIR**, or the best descriptive account of anything connected with the Fair. Articles should be sent in as soon as written, and any that are used by the editor will be paid for at the regular rate. Competition closes September 1st. **\$100.00**

No. 10. A prize of \$15 dollars will be given for the best parody on **EDGAR ALLEN POE'S "RAVEN."** Limited to 8 verses. Competition closes October 1st. **\$15.00**

RULES

All Competitors must cut out and affix the "Competitor's stamp" printed in the upper corner of this page.

Address communications to the editor of "Short Stories" or of "Current Literature."

All MSS. shall be legibly written and original.

They shall be either upon the topic or in the vein indicated in these announcements.

No MS. will be considered eligible for any but the prize marked upon it.

Receipt of MSS. will be acknowledged if postal card is enclosed for the purpose.

Every care will be taken of MSS., but no responsibility will be assumed in case of loss.

No MS. will be returned *unless* an envelope properly stamped and addressed to the author accompanies it.

The editor cannot engage in any correspondence regarding MSS.

The Current Literature Publishing Co.

100-101 E. LAFAYETTE PLACE NEW YORK

Announcement

The June number of "CURRENT LITERATURE" is the first of a series of five special numbers which will be published monthly during the Columbian Exposition at Chicago. Everything of interest in this colossal and remarkable display will be specially gathered for these World's Fair editions.

A representative of "CURRENT LITERATURE" will be upon the grounds and, with the assistance of others, will make special search for the unusual, the strange and marvelous, the picturesque, the worthy in all the departments of science, art, and industry which may be represented.

In every part of the civilized world, there will be published thousands of written accounts which will embody the impressions of the literary world at large. From all these sources the salient features will be gathered, making a record and review of the event which must prove invaluable to every visitor—whether as a keepsake from which in future to refresh his memory, or as a guide which shall single out from month to month the marvels most worthy of attention.

A prize of 100 DOLLARS will be given to that person who, during the World's Fair, shall have contributed the best article on his experiences at the Fair, or who shall have sent in the best descriptive account of anything connected with the Fair, of not over 2,000 words. Articles so contributed will be used from month to month and paid for at regular rates. The prize will be given in addition at the end of the season.

"CURRENT LITERATURE" should be for sale on every first-class news stand in the country—price, 25 cents. Subscription price, \$3.00 per year; with "SHORT STORIES" (popular fiction monthly), \$5.00 per year.

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..... \$50.00

No. 18. A prize of \$50 is offered for the best original story of between 8,000 and 5,000 words. The choice of subject is left entirely to contributors, but MSS. must be carefully designated as for the "BEST STORY" Competition, or they will not be considered as entered in the contest. Competition closes September 1st.

\$50.00

No. 19. A prize of \$50 is offered for the best original CHRISTMAS STORY, and \$25 for the story that shall be selected as the second in the contest. Stories of less than 8,000 or more than 5,000 words will not be accepted in the competition which closes October 1st.

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No. 9. A prize of \$100 will be given for the best article of the writer's experience at the WORLD'S FAIR, or the best descriptive account of anything connected with the Fair. Articles should be sent in as soon as written, and any that are used by the editor will be paid for at the regular rate. Competition closes September 1st.

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No. 10. A prize of \$15 dollars will be given for the best parody on EDGAR ALLEN POE'S "RAVEN." Limited to 8 verses. Competition closes October 1st.

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A representative of "CURRENT LITERATURE" will be upon the grounds and, with the assistance of others, will make special search for the unusual, the strange and marvelous, the picturesque, the worthy in all the departments of science, art, and industry which may be represented.

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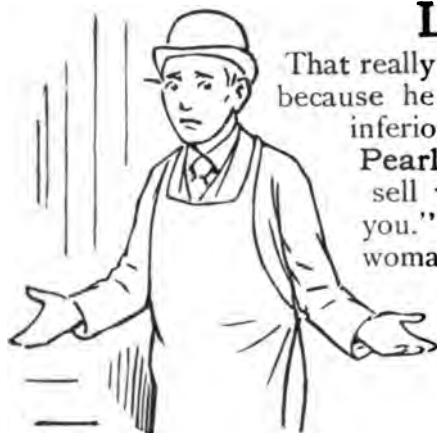
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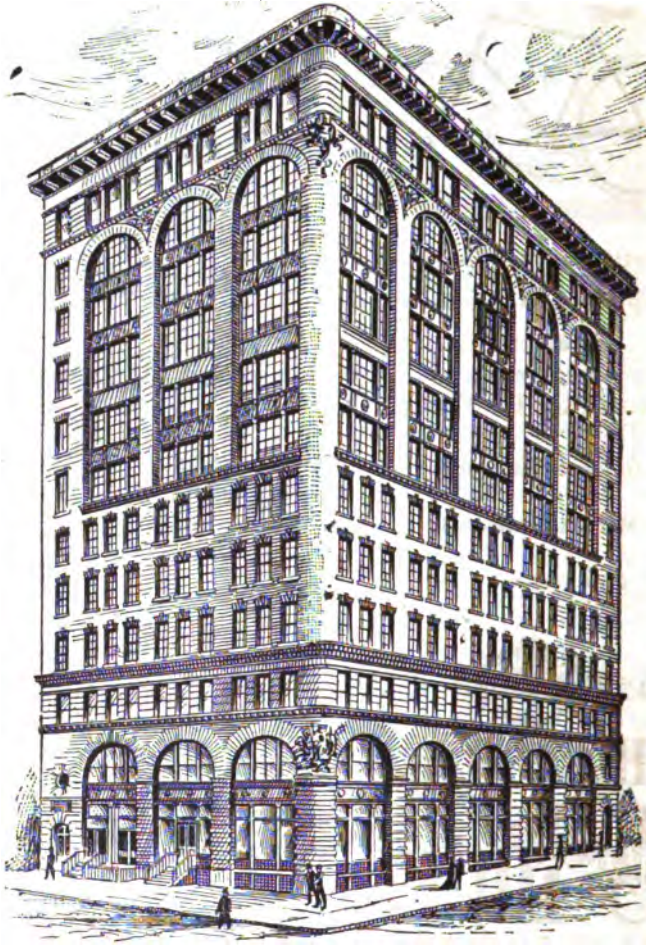
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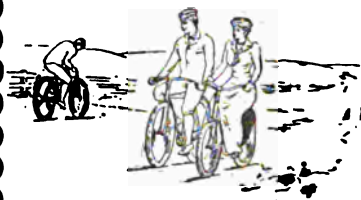
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